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Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Follow-up to and progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 50/203, 51/69, 52/100, 53/120 and 55/71, the present report provides updated information on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women by intergovernmental bodies, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. The report is the third such report presented on a rolling basis in 2001 to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

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** The present report was submitted on 23 August 2001 in order to allow departments of the Secretariat and other entities in the United Nations system sufficient time to submit their contributions.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, by resolution 55/71 of 4 December 2000, requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women on follow-up to and progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration[1] and the Platform for Action[2] adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (Assembly resolutions S-23/2 and S-23/3).

2. In each of the three reports submitted on a rolling basis in the course of a year, information is provided that is most pertinent to the intergovernmental body concerned, in order to facilitate the decision-making process. The present report contains information on the activities undertaken by the organizations of the United Nations system, including United Nations funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and international financial institutions, and by non-governmental organizations and other actors in civil society.

3. The present report provides an update of the developments that have taken place since the submission of the reports of the Secretary-General to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session (A/55/293), the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fifth session (E/CN.6/2001/2) and the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001 (E/2001/78).

II. Results of the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council with regard to the advancement of women, the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

4. The Economic and Social Council, at its high-level segment in 2001, discussed the role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development. In its ministerial declaration, the Council recognized the need to promote the role of women in social and economic development, including by ensuring their participation in the political and economic life of African countries. It called upon the United Nations to support African countries in promoting economic and social policies that are pro-poor and gender-sensitive, and which included employment and income-generating opportunities for poor people, women and youth through microfinance, community-based development and decentralization, enterprise development, food security plans, adequate nutrition and land tenure.

5. The Council devoted the coordination segment of its substantive session of 2001 to access to and transfer of knowledge and technology as a way of boosting economic progress in developing countries, including African nations, with the emphasis placed on improving access to information and communication technology (ICT). In its agreed conclusions on the matter, the Council, noting that participation in the globalized economy required competence in ICT, called, among other things, for developed nations to share with developing countries and countries in economic transition their experience in promoting and establishing ICT sectors so that mistakes could be avoided and benefits maximized. The Council stated that ICT needed to be considered in the broader context of the overall priorities and socio-economic structures of developing countries. It was recognized that ICT can contribute to the empowerment of women and to reducing gender inequalities. In that regard, it was considered that best practice and lessons learned by countries and communities that had already implemented ICT programmes needed to be drawn from and built upon.

6. In a resolution on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 of 24 May 1996 and 52/12 B of 19 December 1997, on improving the working methods of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Council welcomed the efforts of its functional commissions to mainstream a gender perspective in their work.

7. At the same session, the Council considered a number of issues related to women under the segment on social and human rights questions. The Council decided to establish, under the regular agenda item entitled "Coordination, programme and other questions", the regular sub-item entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system", in order to, inter alia, monitor and evaluate achievements made and obstacles encountered by the United Nations

system, and to consider further measures to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system. The Council called upon the Secretary-General, in future reports to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Council and the General Assembly on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to assess progress made on mainstreaming a gender perspective within the United Nations system, including by providing information on key achievements, lessons learned and best practices, and to recommend further actions and strategies for future action within the United Nations system. Further, it called upon the Secretary-General and all bodies reporting to it to address the gender aspects of issues before the Council in their reports. The Council decided to devote the coordination segment of one of its substantive sessions, before 2005, to the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Council on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system.[3]

8. The Council adopted several resolutions recommended by the Commission on the Status of Women, including a resolution concerning discrimination against women and girls in Afghanistan, in which the Council deplored the deteriorating economic, social and cultural conditions of women and girls in all areas of Afghanistan, in particular in areas under the control of the Taliban.[4] It also adopted a resolution on proposals for a multi-year programme of work for the Commission on the Status of Women for 2002-2006,[5] which includes a multi-year work programme for the effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and a resolution on agreed conclusions of the Commission on thematic issues,[6] in which it endorsed agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission with respect to the two thematic issues, namely, women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS, and gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

9. The Council also adopted a resolution on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women,[7] in which the Council demanded that Israel comply fully with the provisions and principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, among other international agreements, in order to protect the rights of Palestinian women and their families. Also adopted was a resolution on the revitalization and strengthening of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), in which the Council recommended that the General Assembly consider the approval of a supplement for 2002 in order to provide the Institute with one more year of financial security, and invited the Assembly to consider requesting the Joint Inspection Unit to conduct a review of the INSTRAW Trust Fund and an urgent evaluation of the activities of the Institute, including options for the Institute's future.

10. The Council also adopted several decisions recommended to it by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session, including a decision in which it approved the Commission's recommendations that a gender approach be systematically adopted throughout the preparations for and in the outcome of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to be held at Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 7 September 2001, and that the situation of women and children be given special attention in the outcome of the Conference.[8]

11. The Council also adopted a decision on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system,[9] in which it approved the Commission's request to all special procedures and other human rights mechanisms of the Commission and Subcommission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights regularly and systematically take a gender perspective into account in implementing their mandates. In another decision on traditional practices affecting the health of women and the girl child,[10] the Council endorsed the decision of the Subcommission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the topic for two more years.

III. Organizations of the United Nations system

12. Since the submission to the General Assembly of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/55/293), the organizations of the United Nations system have continued to assist in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and

Platform for Action, and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Information received by the United Nations Secretariat on the programmes, policies and other activities undertaken for the implementation of the Platform for Action by United Nations entities is summarized below. The present report does not contain information on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), since a separate report on its activities will be before the General Assembly.

A. United Nations

13. The *Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women* of the United Nations Secretariat continued to support and monitor efforts to incorporate a gender perspective into the substantive work programmes throughout the United Nations system. Within the Secretariat, a competence development programme is being implemented in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Office for Human Resources Management. The programme will conclude at the end of 2001 with a meeting of all Professional staff to review findings and recommendations. It will be followed by a special programme for the Division for the Advancement of Women aimed at further developing catalytic roles to support gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations. A competence development programme is being developed for the United Nations Office at Vienna, in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources Management.

14. In November 2000, an assessment was made of the incorporation of a gender perspective into the substantive work of the Economic Commission for Europe, and a comprehensive report prepared with findings and recommendations. The management of the Commission has taken steps to ensure the implementation of the recommendations. Similarly, an assessment was made of the gender mainstreaming efforts of the United Nations Office at Vienna in 2001, and training in gender mainstreaming was provided for the field representatives of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. An assessment of good practice in gender mainstreaming has been carried out in the Office of Legal Affairs.

15. The Office of the Special Adviser organized a workshop on gender mainstreaming for the members of the Inter-agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, in conjunction with the annual session of the Meeting, which was held in New York from 27 February to 2 March 2001. The fourth joint workshop of the Meeting and the Working Party on Gender Equality at the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development was held at the United Nations Office at Vienna, from 23 to 25 April 2001. The Meeting addressed governance, poverty reduction and gender equality, and brought together participants from a range of organizations from the United Nations system and representatives from the member countries of the Development Assistance Committee.

16. As follow-up to the open discussion on women, peace and security held by the Security Council in October 2001 and pursuant to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000, on the same subject, the Special Adviser chairs an inter-agency task force on women, peace and security. The task force has prepared an action plan, outlining the ways in which the various parts of the system will contribute to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

17. The review of existing mechanisms and approaches for inter-agency cooperation, requested by the Administrative Committee on Coordination High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management, provided an opportunity to address the responsibilities for promoting gender equality both at the policy level, through the two Committees, and at working level, through the Inter-agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality, and to sharpen the focus on gender mainstreaming in all policies, programmes and activities of the United Nations system. A set of recommendations aimed at reinforcing gender mainstreaming efforts within the United Nations system was submitted to the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

18. In order to ensure the continuity of the Beijing process and support the follow-up to the commitments taken with regard to gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women, the Special Adviser attended several conferences and meetings in various regions, including the First Summit of Arab First Ladies on Current Challenges and Future Prospects, held at Cairo from 18 to 20 November 2000; the third Africa Women's Forum, held at Tunis from 22 to 24 January

2001; and the workshop on the least developed countries, convened by the Government of South Africa and the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at Capetown, South Africa, from 21 to 23 March 2001 to discuss the question of building capacities for mainstreaming gender in development strategies. The Special Adviser also met with high-level officials to discuss strategies for the implementation of intergovernmental commitments and to provide information on efforts taken within the United Nations system. In statements and discussions, the Special Adviser has particularly stressed the need to ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated into the preparations for, outcomes of and follow-up to United Nations conferences and events, such as the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, held in New York from 25 to 27 June 2001; the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance to be held at Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 7 September 2001; and the International Conference on Financing for Development to be held at Monterrey, Mexico, from 18 to 22 March 2002.

19. The Office of the Special Adviser also collaborated closely with the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with regard to preparations for the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 54/4, annex). The Special Adviser attended an expert meeting held on the proposed draft rules of procedure of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women relating to the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which was held at Berlin from 27 to 30 November 2000.

20. The *Division for the Advancement of Women* of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized three expert group meetings. The first, organized jointly with the World Health Organization and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) on the theme "The HIV/AIDS pandemic and its gender implications", was held at Windhoek, from 13 to 17 November 2000. The second expert group meeting was organized in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNIFEM, on the theme "Gender and racial discrimination". Both expert group meetings developed policy recommendations which were forwarded to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fifth session, held in March 2001. In collaboration with UNIFEM, the Division convened a third expert group meeting at Ulaanbaatar, from 4 to 8 June 2001. The meeting, on the theme "Situation of rural women within the context of globalization", addressed the social and economic challenges and opportunities faced by women in rural areas. The findings of the meeting were incorporated into the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/56/268), which is before the General Assembly at its current session.

21. The Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with the Government of Germany, organized a meeting from 27 to 30 November 2000 to review and finalize the proposed draft rules of procedure for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Division, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, the Organization of African Unity and the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development, organized a consultative meeting on enhancing women's participation in peace-building at Addis Ababa, on 15 and 16 January 2001. The meeting reviewed current initiatives with regard to women and peace-building in sub-Saharan Africa, and identified gaps, as well as needs in regard to capacity-building. The Division also organized a subregional training workshop in support of the preparation of the State party reports to be submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The workshop was held at Auckland, New Zealand, from 13 to 15 February 2001, in collaboration with the Government of New Zealand, the secretariat of the Pacific Community, the office of the United Nations Development Programme in Fiji, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the UNIFEM regional office for the Pacific.

22. The *Statistics Division* of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs continues to carry out its mandate related to sex-disaggregated statistics, as outlined in the Platform for Action. Priority is given to improving methods for the measurement of work, specifically action to improve data on the full contribution of women and men to the economy. The Division continues to work on gender issues in the measurement of paid and unpaid work. Current activities include the development of a set of

international guidelines for collecting time-use data; the further development of a trial international classification of activities for time-use statistics; and the improvement of statistics on participation in difficult-to-measure sectors of the labour force.

23. The *Office of Internal Oversight Services* has developed an outline on how gender mainstreaming would be incorporated into the programme for internal oversight, especially the activities related to evaluation, monitoring and audit. As requested in the instructions for the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, the Office gave specific attention in its submission to gender mainstreaming, including the definition of objectives, accomplishments and indicators for the audit subprogramme. The Office has held discussions at the senior management level on the implementation of its commitment to incorporating a gender perspective into its internal analyses, policies and planning processes.

24. The *Department of Political Affairs* has placed increased emphasis on the role of women and the importance of gender mainstreaming in its work both at United Nations Headquarters and in the field. Several regional divisions maintain a roster of women's groups in the region in order to facilitate consultation in the course of political missions. The Electoral Assistance Division maintains a roster of election experts and seeks to increase the number of women listed. Efforts were made to ensure appropriate female representation in United Nations peace-building support offices, in particular in the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau. Similar efforts are being made regarding the staffing of the United Nations Office in Liberia. In the context of the Arusha Agreement on Burundi, the Implementation Monitoring Committee, which is chaired by the United Nations, participated in a two-day gender-mainstreaming workshop held in August 2001, which was convened by UNIFEM in consultation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region.

25. The *Department for Disarmament Affairs* collaborated with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women in early 2001 in a production of the publication *Gender Perspectives on Disarmament — Briefing Notes*, which outlines gender perspectives on weapons of mass destruction, small arms, landmines, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and disarmament for development initiatives. In the preparations for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001, the Department facilitated the focus on the impact on women. The preamble to the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference contains a specific reference to the negative impact on women. While there were no budget allocations for gender activities during the current biennium, the Department attempted to develop further the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in its substantive programme by using, to the greatest extent possible, its existing financial and human resources. For the biennium 2002-2003, the Department has included a gender component in each of its substantive subprogrammes.

26. Gender and peacekeeping training material has been developed by the *Department of Peacekeeping Operations* for military personnel and civilian police, with a view to enabling peacekeepers to integrate a gender perspective into all of their activities. The training material has been field-tested and is in the process of being finalized. A training curriculum on gender sensitivity for civilians is also being developed. In the light of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Department has drawn up a plan of action to implement the provisions of the resolution. Under this plan, the Department has strengthened its commitment to appointing women to senior posts at decision-making levels. It is also encouraging Member States to submit qualified female candidates for senior military appointments, and to serve as military observers and civilian police officers.

27. The offices of gender affairs in the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor have facilitated and supported efforts to mainstream a gender perspective within each mission. They have also supported national machineries for women in their respective host countries. Focal points for women have been appointed in many of the field missions.

28. In his most recent report on the implementation of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/977), the Secretary-General recommended that the Department have adequate gender expertise at United Nations Headquarters so that a gender perspective is interwoven into all aspects of its work. In the light of this recommendation, the most recent budget submission for the Department to

the General Assembly includes a request for gender experts at Headquarters.

29. The *Department of Public Information* continued to generate media coverage of women's issues and events, at Headquarters and in the field, in its press coverage and promotion of the work of intergovernmental bodies, including the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The United Nations News Service focused on women's issues on a regular basis in its coverage of the work of relevant United Nations bodies and various other events and activities devoted to the promotion of women's rights. The issue of the advancement of women was routinely addressed as a regular output of the Video Section. The United Nations Radio programme, "Women", was instrumental in putting women's issues on air throughout the world. Cross-cutting issues relevant to women were given high priority in United Nations radio programmes that were broadcast in multiple languages. The publications prepared by the Department, such as *Basic Facts about the United Nations*, *UN Chronicle* and *UN in Brief*, have provided extensive coverage of the issues raised in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

30. The Department acted as lead agency for the organization of an inter-agency special event to observe International Women's Day 2001, under the theme "Women, peace and security: women managing conflict". The observance highlighted the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and focused on the international community's commitment to addressing the devastating impact of armed conflict on women, their critical role in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building, and the need to ensure the full participation of women in peace processes.

31. The *United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service*, as part of its information outreach, publications and communications programme, has frequently covered and reported on gender-related United Nations events and meetings. The publications of the Service are distributed to some 6,000 non-governmental organizations throughout the world, around 50 per cent of which are based in developing countries, and to over 1,000 development professionals in the United Nations system, government and bilateral agencies. The major meetings covered include the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the forty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

32. The *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, together with the United Nations Population Fund, organized a meeting from 25 to 27 June 2001 on the application of human rights to reproductive and sexual health. The meeting defined action and recommendations for achieving a better implementation of treaty obligations at the domestic level so as to promote and ensure the enjoyment by women and men of reproductive and sexual health. Pursuant to the adoption by the Human Rights Committee, in 2000, of its General Comment No. 28, which updated its General Comment No. 4 (1981) on article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on equality of rights between men and women, and the adoption by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in the same year of its General Recommendation XXV on gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights embarked in 2001 on the preparation of a general comment on article 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on equality of rights between men and women.

33. The Office reflected gender concerns in its preparations for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. A publication on gender dimensions of racial discrimination was distributed during the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, and will be circulated during the Conference itself. The Office has singled out problems affecting girls in its input to the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on children. It also co-sponsored, with the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Institutions and the Fiji Human Rights Commission, a regional workshop on the role of national institutions in advancing the international human rights of women, held in Fiji from 5 to 7 May 2001. The workshop affirmed the importance of international standards on the rights of women, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, its Optional Protocol, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, notwithstanding

countervailing cultural, traditional and religious practices.

34. At the secretariat of the *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)*, the position of departmental focal point on women, dealing with both gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women in the secretariat, was consolidated through the creation of a new unit for civil society outreach within the executive direction and management programme of UNCTAD and the incorporation of the functions of the focal point into that office. Staff resources were therefore officially allocated to the function of departmental focal point. Efforts have been made to integrate gender-related aspects into the work programme, and to carry out consultations with substantive staff on gender-based budgeting.

35. The secretariat of UNCTAD undertook several activities related to gender, including in the preparation and organization of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, at Brussels, from 14 to 20 May 2001. A pre-Conference workshop on the theme "The least developed countries: building capacities for mainstreaming gender in development strategies", was held at Capetown, South Africa, in March 2001, to address poverty eradication, integrating a gender perspective into budgets and development strategies, trade, integrating a gender perspective into statistics, microcredit and private and public sector initiatives. The results of that meeting were made available to delegations at the Conference. Meetings related to gender and development issues were held with non-governmental organizations both during the sessions of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Conference and at the Conference itself. A meeting held on sustainable development and selected gender items in the least developed countries included representatives of non-governmental organizations active with regard to gender and development and to humanitarian issues. A high-level parliamentary round-table meeting was also held, concentrating on key issues on the agenda of the Conference, such as commodities and agriculture, capacity-building and new technologies for development, as well as financing for development, debt relief and capital flows. Gender and development were addressed as a cross-sectoral issue, and constitute part of the terms of reference of the parliamentary network set up to assist in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference. A special parallel event, the Women Entrepreneurs Forum, was held during the Conference and attracted a considerable number of delegates and civil society actors participating in the Conference.

36. During the biennium 2000-2001, the departmental focal point on women and staff of the Civil Society Outreach unit developed a proposal for a pilot project on developing new government and civil society alliances for addressing the gender and development dimensions of globalization. A meeting of delegates from interested countries and invited resource persons was held at Geneva in July 2001 to further define methodological aspects of the proposal for addressing the concrete requirements of participating countries during the implementation phase.

37. The *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)* continued to focus its efforts on ensuring gender equality in its personnel practices, and gender sensitivity in all of its projects and programmes. Gender equality is addressed in all sectoral and thematic work of UNEP. Further, the Governing Council of UNEP has adopted two decisions relevant to gender issues. Paragraph 19 of decision GCSS.VI/1 of 31 May 2001, on the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, provides that greater emphasis be given to a gender perspective in decision-making concerning the management of the environment and natural resources. In decision 21/19 of 9 February 2001, on the role of civil society, the Governing Council requested that the Executive Director submit for its consideration a draft strategy for the active engagement of civil society, including major groups, in the work of UNEP. These decisions further enhance the mandate of UNEP in mainstreaming a gender perspective into its projects and programmes.

38. UNEP has developed a strategy on mainstreaming a gender perspective in its policy, programming and operational procedures. The strategy is aimed at the establishment of mechanisms and accountability processes that would ensure the integration of gender equality into its policies, programmes and operations, building the capacity of its staff members and facilitating its contribution to the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The strategy will be considered by the senior management group of UNEP and will be issued as a policy directive. UNEP is also finalizing a framework for a global network of gender and environment focal points in

government and international non-governmental organizations. It will serve for the exchange of information and collection of data, as well as capacity-building, at the national, regional and international levels. UNEP has also produced and disseminated a publication that contains success stories on gender and environment.

39. The function of gender mainstreaming in the *United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)* has been consolidated within its reorganized structure, and its gender policy is accordingly being reviewed in 2001. Gender input to the work programme and budget for the biennium 2002-2003 were made by a subgroup, established by the cross-cutting gender task force. The medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 incorporates a gender perspective and the input of the Gender Policy Unit to the system-wide medium term plan for the advancement of women, by providing further guidance for the biennium 2004-2005.

40. A booklet on women and urban governance was published for the twenty-fifth special session of the General Assembly and is an integral part of the Global Campaign for Good Urban Governance. The theme for World Habitat Day in 2000, "Women in urban governance", influenced activities in towns and cities throughout the world. The Centre collaborated with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in supporting the Asia-Pacific Summit of Women Mayors and Councillors, held in June 2001. Legal research on women's land and housing rights in East Africa is in the process of publication, as is a position paper on women and secure tenure. Cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on a housing rights programme comprises a major focus on women's property rights. Collaboration with partners included input to the discussion by the Commission on Human Rights, which led to the adoption of resolution 2001/34 of 23 April 2001 on women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing. Support to partners includes that provided to activities on women's land rights of the member networks of the Huairou Commission.

41. The *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)* recently completed a process of local and regional consultations with refugee, displaced and returnee women, culminating in a global dialogue held at Geneva from 20 to 22 June 2001. The aim of this process was to encourage UNHCR to involve women in all stages of planning, implementation and evaluation of projects, to provide better protection and to form equal partnerships with the refugee women themselves. A wide variety of issues of concern were raised by the women, ranging from equal access to documentation and asylum procedures to the trafficking of refugee women and girls. A 10-year review, carried out by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, is currently assessing the implementation of the UNHCR policy on refugee women and its guidelines on the protection of refugee women. The review will be used to develop a new policy statement on gender mainstreaming.

42. A gender adviser was deployed as part of the emergency response teams following attacks at the Guinean border in 2000. The adviser worked with UNHCR staff, security forces and non-governmental groups to ensure that steps were taken to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, and to empower young girls and survivors of sexual violence through education and psychosocial support. Gender teams are being created in the Middle East, North Africa and countries in East Africa and the Horn of Africa in order to build the capacity of all staff to analyse and develop programmes from a gender perspective. UNHCR continues to support women's peace-building initiatives. At UNHCR, there has been increased collaboration across sectors and the inclusion of the empowerment of women as part of the strategy to mainstream a gender perspective into activities related to protection, programming and the achievement of durable solutions. Resource constraints remain a problem, however, as does the sustainability of changes when they are not made an integral part of policies, strategies, activities, monitoring and evaluation of protection and assistance activities.

43. Collaborative agreements have been established between the Women and Development Unit of the *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)* and other substantive divisions that consider such issues as statistics, globalization, gender and trade, natural disasters and human settlements. One major result of this collaboration was from the First Americas Conference on Statistics, held at ECLAC headquarters in May 2001, which recognized the role played by ECLAC in the definition and calculation of gender indicators and agreed to the

formation of a working group on gender indicators as part of the Conference.

44. In order for the *Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)* to promote the participation of women in economic development, arrangements were made for women entrepreneurs to exhibit their products at the ESCAP Asian and Pacific Trade Fair 2000, held at New Delhi in November 2000. This activity resulted in many participants establishing business contacts within and beyond the region, and with some participants forming women business councils in their own country. A seminar on education and career opportunities in ICT and e-commerce for women was held concurrently. ESCAP, in collaboration with the Asian Women's Resource Exchange, an Internet-based women's information network and service, organized a regional training workshop on women's electronic network training at Seoul, in July 2001, in the context of phase two of the project on strengthening the women's information network through computer networking in the Asian and Pacific region. A follow-up study has found that most of the workshop participants had set up their own web sites, mailing lists or online discussion groups, and had conducted orientation and training.

45. ESCAP also organized an expert group meeting in May 2001, on social safety nets for women. The meeting proposed a new model of social protection that includes the extension of existing schemes to the informal sector, the development new systems (e.g., within the context of social investment funds) and the upscaling of indigenous community-based and self-help groups. ESCAP convened the Asia-Pacific Summit of Women Mayors and Councillors in Thailand from 19 to 22 June 2001, at which the Phitsanulok Declaration on the Advancement of Women in Local Government was adopted. The Declaration called for measures to overcome the barriers that prevent women from entering politics at the local level, with a goal of 50-50 representation between men and women in local government. Further, a regional seminar on the use of legal instruments to combat trafficking in women and children was convened at Bangkok, from 1 to 3 August 2001.

46. On 25 April 2001, the Commission adopted resolution 57/3, on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, by which it called for the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to assist members and associate members in the promotion of gender mainstreaming and integrating gender concerns into public policy through measures which include gender budgeting, gender auditing, sex-disaggregated data and monitoring and performance indicators. To coordinate the regional activities of United Nations agencies working on gender issues, the Thematic Working Group on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, co-chaired by ESCAP and UNIFEM, was established within the framework of the inter-agency regional coordination meeting.

47. The *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)* continued to monitor the situation of women in the region. The Government of Saudi Arabia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 7 September 2000, but with reservations regarding the provisions that conflict with religious convictions and national sovereignty. Other milestones included the appointment by the Government of Yemen of a woman as Minister of Human Rights. In November 2000, the League of Arab States, the National Commission for Women in Egypt and the Hariri Foundation of Lebanon convened the First Arab Summit for Women. An important decision was taken to set up a permanent coordination mechanism and to hold regular meetings for the advancement of Arab women.

48. The *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* focused on mainstreaming a gender perspective into its six priority areas of work, namely, democratic governance, poverty reduction and pro-poor policies, sustainable energy and environment, crisis prevention and recovery, HIV/AIDS and ICT. One hundred and five UNDP country offices, covering 112 programme countries, reported in the results-oriented annual report (ROAR) for 2000 on activities in support of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The main focus was on advocacy, networking and partnership building, development of institutional capacity and development of gender policies and strategies.

49. In the area of policy support and capacity-building, UNDP, in its upstream interventions, focused primarily on the articulation of gender-sensitive national policies and legal frameworks and on the strengthening of national institutions for the advancement of women. UNDP facilitated the policy dialogue among stakeholders with a view to their

achieving full ownership of national gender strategies, legal reform processes for the protection of women's rights, and sectoral gender and development policies and programmes. Much was done in the collection of sex-disaggregated data in support of national reporting to the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session and in the preparation of national human development reports and the reports submitted by States parties to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

50. Further, UNDP continued to facilitate dialogue and partnerships at the national and local levels between governmental institutions and civil society and across line ministries in order to expand capacities and commitment to gender equality. In countries in special development situations, in particular post-conflict environments, UNDP has increased its support to gender-specific action in the emergency and reconstruction phases. It has recently identified the period of transition to recovery as the most critical for the implementation of the legal and institutional measures by which gender equality can be systematically integrated at all levels of recovery programmes. The UNDP global gender programme has further developed tools and methodologies to build the organizational capacity for gender mainstreaming and ensure that all of the policies and programmes of UNDP reflect gender concerns.

51. The *United Nations Volunteers (UNV)* continued its collaboration with UNDP and UNIFEM on its pilot project, entitled "Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action: UNV support to gender mainstreaming". The operational activities of this joint project will culminate at the end of 2001, by which time all 21 specialists deployed to four geographical regions at the start of the project will have terminated their assignments. With the gradual phasing out of the activities, a comprehensive report on the project and its operational activities is expected to be issued. The report will contain recommendations on proposed methodologies for gender mainstreaming and developing synergies with other gender programmes, and an outline of a methodological framework and tools for the next phase.

52. During 2000, the *United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)* assisted Governments and civil society partners in creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women through the development of information materials, public information campaigns, studies, provision of support to national committees and the work of legislative bodies with regard to the promotion of the equal rights of girls and women. In preparing for the special session of the General Assembly on children, UNICEF collaborated with the Society for International Development on a special issue, which was launched during the third session of the Preparatory Committee, held in June 2001. The purpose was to document and analyse the global experience of the complementarity of activism for children's rights and for women's rights.

53. In 2000, UNICEF stepped up its activities addressing gender issues in education. The achievement of quality girls' education was articulated by UNICEF as a key strategy in the Education for All initiative, and in several countries the development of community-based initiatives for girls' education served as a model for Education for All programming. Over 60 UNICEF programmes throughout the world now focus on girls' education. Increases in enrolment rates of girls were reported in over 20 countries in 2000. Globally, an estimated 10,000 schools in 46 countries benefited from some form of UNICEF support to improve the learning environment experienced by children, while roughly 270,000 teachers and school principals participated in training programmes directly supported by UNICEF.

54. Gains were also made in 2000 through UNICEF efforts to combat female genital mutilation in 16 countries. The involvement of young people in Eritrea and initiatives to involve religious leaders in Somalia and former practitioners in the Niger provide lessons for replication. The approach to eradicating the practice is moving from single sector, vertical interventions to community-based action and information, supported by new tools for the assessment of practices and the measurement of change. UNICEF made specific contributions to the addressing of harmful practices, including organizing a global consultation on the issue of early marriage and supporting efforts to delay the age of marriage in the Asian and African regions. In October 2000, the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre invited experts from around the world to review a draft of a digest on early marriage and outline future strategies to address that issue. The digest was launched in March 2001. Furthermore, UNICEF supported a study on early marriage and early

pregnancy in six countries in West Africa. The study concluded that to reduce the incidence of early marriage and early pregnancy, national programmes and policies must address the social, cultural and economic factors that contribute to their persistence.

55. The *United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)* supports the implementation of the international agenda within its mandate by promoting gender equality within key programme areas, such as reproductive health, population and development, and advocacy. UNFPA allocates more than 60 per cent of its resources to activities that help to increase access to reproductive health and to prevent the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, focusing on women and girls.

56. Further, UNFPA helps to provide services and information on reproductive health to adolescent boys and girls, while emphasizing the need for men's positive involvement in improving the status of women. Capacity-building for gender mainstreaming is another area supported by UNFPA, with the aim of ensuring the sustainability of gender mainstreaming. The Fund has produced two important manuals to reinforce efforts in this area: a gender mainstreaming training manual, to be used in staff training, and a programme guide for health-care providers and managers on gender-based violence. In addition, gender equality and empowerment of women constitute part of the principal organizational goals of the multi-year funding framework of the Fund.

57. In 2001, UNFPA is convening consultative meetings on trafficking of women and children and on the impact of conflict on women and girls, which will provide important input into the development of position papers and programme strategies in these areas. UNFPA continues to support efforts to eradicate traditional harmful practices affecting women, including female genital mutilation, and was one of the funding agencies of an international technical meeting on indicators to measure change and sustainability in regard to that practice.

58. Of the approximately 83 million people provided with food aid by the *World Food Programme (WFP)* in 2000, 52 per cent were women and girls. In addition, in 2000, WFP conducted a follow-up survey of its Beijing commitments. Major achievements in that regard were as follows: more than 80 per cent of all operations have women on committees that identify beneficiaries, manage food, and identify assets to be created; 85 per cent have reflected the commitments in programme design and contractual agreements with partners; and about 90 per cent of the country offices report sex-disaggregated data on development, though less on relief operations. WFP is still striving to allocate 60 per cent of its development resources to females and 50 per cent of its educational support to girls. Two new efforts in this regard are the WFP school feeding initiative and the provision of food assistance to families affected by HIV/AIDS. With the former, WFP aims to increase the enrolment and attendance of children from poor families, and to reduce the gender gap in primary education through the provision of take-home food rations to girls; with the latter, WFP incorporates HIV/AIDS care and prevention measures into its programmes and, through partners, supports skills training, nutrition and counselling activities for affected women and children.

59. In 2000, WFP mainstreamed a gender perspective into budgets, while gender performance was evaluated for country programmes, emergency and protracted relief and recovery operations. With the introduction of its new corporate information system in 2001, WFP began to collect data on planned and actual gender-related expenditure. New monitoring and evaluation guidelines that seek to mainstream gender concerns are being developed. A gender perspective was also mainstreamed into the material prepared for 10 workshops on core skills to implement the WFP "Enabling development" policy, held in 2001. WFP has been successful in increasing the proportion of female international Professional staff, from 25 per cent in 1996 to 36 per cent in 2000.

B. Specialized agencies

60. The *International Labour Organization (ILO)* developed a follow-up strategy to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, which was submitted to its Governing Body for adoption in November 2000. The strategy focuses on gender mainstreaming in all ILO activities within the framework of the outcome of the special session and in the ILO decent work agenda, and addresses fundamental principles and rights at work, employment and income, social protection and social dialogue. In January 2001, an inter-agency consultative meeting on gender issues developed a work plan for the implementation of the follow-up strategy, covering

programmes, projects and intersectoral research in areas of priority. More systematic efforts were made to strengthen capacity-building in two areas, namely, the further enhancement of team-building for development of regional gender mainstreaming strategies, and emphasis on capacity-building in gender analysis and planning in poverty eradication, job creation, social protection and social dialogue. More intense efforts were focused on strengthening the gender aspect in major programmes such as HIV/AIDS and crisis response, entrepreneurship development, the role of trade unions in promoting gender equality, and the convening of a seminar on sexual harassment in September 2001.

61. The Plan of Action of the *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)* for Women in Development (1996-2001) outlines a framework for integrating a gender perspective into all FAO programmes and activities in response to the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The implementation of the Plan of Action is led by the Women and Population Division of the Sustainable Development Department. The Plan of Action will also be field-tested in collaboration with policy staff at regional FAO offices. The Division, in collaboration with all other FAO divisions, worked on the preparation of the new Plan of Action on Gender and Development (2002-2007) with a view to mainstreaming gender issues into all activities of the organization. Under that Plan of Action, gender analysis will be incorporated into FAO projects and will be fully taken into account in the preparation of national action plans for agricultural and rural development. In addition, several socio-economic and gender analysis workshops were held in various countries. Census studies have been organized in 2001 to improve the collection of data and information on human resources, as well as on the activities and constraints of rural populations.

62. The *International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)* has taken a number of steps to advance women within the organization, and information on the recruitment of women at ICAO forms part of its annual work programme. The ICAO Council has set a minimum target of an increase of one per cent annually for the appointment of women at the Professional level over the forthcoming 10 years. The number of Professional posts held by women at ICAO rose from 64 in 1998, to 66 in 1999, and to 72 in 2000. National civil aviation administrations remain the principal source of recruitment. The representation of women in the administrations, in particular in technical positions, is an important factor in the number of applications submitted by women. ICAO pays particular attention to that source of recruitment. The Secretary-General of ICAO has requested officers who are on mission or servicing meetings at its regional offices to continue their efforts to identify women candidates with qualifications and work experience corresponding to ICAO positions. The ICAO technical cooperation programme provides fellowships in specific fields of training and encourages women to apply.

63. The *World Bank* has prepared a gender mainstreaming strategy paper and created an internal incentive fund for the implementation of the proposed strategy. Projects supported by the World Bank include a women and justice project in Argentina, a community empowerment project in East Timor, and a study of the possible impact of legal frameworks on women's economic participation in the Middle East and North Africa. The World Bank's Development Marketplace supported several innovative gender projects, including those on female genital mutilation in Africa.

64. Among recent World Bank publications was the report, *Engendering Development — Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*. The report brings together existing and new research from several social science disciplines to examine the costs of persistent gender disparities to the well-being of women and the development prospects of societies. The report has been translated into several languages, including Russian, Chinese and Vietnamese, and further translations are planned. The World Bank also produced a chapter on gender for the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Sourcebook*. The chapter is designed to guide those involved in the preparation of poverty reduction strategy papers in identifying and implementing gender-sensitive policies and programmes. The *Sourcebook* is available in French, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese.

65. The World Bank's statistical indicators on gender were broadened and now include a separate database on gender statistics in the Latin American region. Several new initiatives were launched, including those on gender and HIV/AIDS, gender and economic policy, and a series of seminars on gender and the digital divide. The World Bank also initiated the Development Gateway, a web portal containing information on

various development topics, including gender, and convened training courses, workshops, seminars and knowledge-sharing events on various topics, such as technology and gender, the gender dimension of human rights, and gender, post-conflict and HIV/AIDS.

66. The *International Telecommunication Union (ITU)* held a special event on gender and emergency telecommunications during the session of the ITU Council held in 2000. In 2001, ITU hosted a panel discussion on the ITU reform process, change and gender. The Council, in its discussion of the ITU reform in 2001, also elaborated the first gender-related resolution adopted at ITU. The resolution, on gender perspective in ITU human resources, management, policy and practice, was adopted by the Council in June 2001. A workshop on gender issues was conducted for ITU staff in the second quarter of 2001, resulting in the submission of a business plan and an action plan to ITU management for implementation. Within the context of inter-agency cooperation and based on the memorandum of understanding signed in 2000 between ITU, UNIFEM and UNDP, work was initiated on the inclusion of a gender perspective in the preparations for and outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society, the first phase of which will be held at Geneva in December 2003 and the second phase at Tunis in 2005.

67. The Task Force on Gender Issues, established in 1998, continued its work on incorporating a gender perspective into telecommunication policy. A pilot session was convened at the development symposium for regulators, held in November 2000. In addition, the Task Force developed gender awareness guidelines for use by licensing and regulatory bodies to mainstream gender awareness into the licensing and regulatory functions of national agencies. A gender questionnaire was disseminated to regulators and telecommunication administrations in 2000 and 2001, with a positive response expressing interest in receiving advice and/or assistance in implementing gender equality strategies. Three gender-training workshops were carried out for the trainers of the multinational telecommunication training institute at Dakar. In 2000, ITU continued to recruit more women than men and achieved a net increase of six in the number of women and an increase in the proportion of women, to 25 per cent of all staff in the Professional and higher level categories compared to 23 per cent at the end of 1999.

68. The *World Meteorological Organization (WMO)* has made progress with regard to several of its gender related objectives. In particular, there has been a significant increase in the hiring of women in the Professional or higher categories over the past two years; women now make up over 25 per cent of the staff in those categories, up from about 20 per cent. A major international conference on women in meteorology and hydrology is being organized. This event will examine the progress made since the convening of the conference on the same topic in 1997, and will focus on charting future courses of action in the following areas that are critical to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in WMO activities, namely, education and training, career and promotion opportunities, work environment policies and practices, participation in the work of WMO and representation of women in the WMO secretariat.

69. A survey of all WMO member countries concerning the participation of women in meteorological and hydrological services is being carried out in conjunction with the preparations for the above-mentioned conference. WMO continues to highlight the contribution of women in meteorology and hydrology through articles in the WMO bulletin and the development of a web site. In June 2001, WMO hosted the annual meeting of the Organizational and Institutional Gender Information Network (ORIGIN). Discussions between ORIGIN members and the WMO gender team have led to preliminary steps being taken towards the development of a gender policy for WMO.

70. In 1999, the *International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)* undertook an extensive review of gender mainstreaming in its project and programme portfolio, which was presented to the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session. In 2000, the Fund embarked on a major effort to enhance gender mainstreaming. Special programmes are either being continued or about to be initiated in all IFAD regional divisions and in the Technical Advisory Division. Funding for the purpose has been mobilized from a combination of grant and trust funds. At present, about one half of IFAD-approved projects systematically address gender issues. During the biennium 2000-2001, IFAD also laid the basis for a gender web site, with the preparation of over 130 gender learning notes and other gender materials. The web site will be operational in September 2001. The Fund is making progress in

increasing the representation of women in professional and managerial positions, although some imbalance continues, in particular at the senior, decision-making levels. IFAD is embarking on a plan of action to improve gender balance and staffing at all levels.

71. The *United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)* continued to take steps to ensure gender equality in its personnel practices and to address gender issues in programmatic activities. It has developed an integrated programme approach to improve services in the various fields of industrial development. Within the service module aimed at the promotion of small and medium enterprises, special emphasis is placed on women entrepreneurship development, both in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Together with other activities, this effort creates an enabling environment for the integration of women in the process of socio-economic development.

72. Women play a significant role in development of microenterprises and small- and medium-sized enterprises, both as a creative and productive industrial human resource base and, increasingly, as entrepreneurs. The women's entrepreneurship development programme of UNIDO is designed to enable women entrepreneurs to meet the challenges of changing global and local economic environments. Now in its third phase, the programme in the United Republic of Tanzania trains women to start up and manage small-scale, food-processing businesses. Training covers aspects of supply, processing of local products, hygiene and business management, and has helped create nearly 350 permanent jobs. A training of trainers programme on women entrepreneurs in the food-processing sector has been completed, in collaboration with IFAD on the basis of a cost-sharing agreement. In addition, UNIDO continued its women's entrepreneurship development programme through training programmes to assist women entrepreneurs in setting up clusters in the agro-food-processing sector.

73. The *International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)* reports biennially to its Board of Governors on the progress made in implementing General Conference resolutions which have their origin in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The International Advisory Group on Gender Issues advises the Director-General on the impact of gender on IAEA programmes. Membership of the Group is drawn from regulatory organizations, the nuclear industry, and research and academic institutes in member States. A plan of action on possible ways and means of introducing gender equality and gender mainstreaming into policies and programmes is being developed. An allocation for work on gender issues has been included on the regular budget.

C. United Nations entities

74. In October 2000, the *United Nations University (UNU)* organized a workshop on future issues in gender education and research as a means of soliciting expert advice in identifying areas in which its specific characteristics as an academic institution within the United Nations system could best be employed to promote the implementation of the Platform for Action. UNU has also increased its efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into all its research and capacity development activities. In addition, UNU continued to carry out activities related to gender issues, focusing on the areas of peace and governance with a research project on women and children in post-conflict peace-building efforts, and on the area of environment and sustainable development with projects documenting and analysing the role of women in the conservation and management of natural resources.

75. The *International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)* made significant progress in the implementation of the Institute's new working method, the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS), which enables the Institute to produce, manage and disseminate gender research, training and information globally throughout the world by means of new information and communication technologies. By using electronic networking, INSTRAW has developed an innovative approach to research, capacity-building and information-sharing. It creates online communities of researchers, trainers, ICT specialists, development practitioners and women and men activists who present and discuss relevant issues, as well as research findings, research and training needs and their implications for policy and practice.

76. The Institute has significantly developed and expanded its network of national and regional organizations, as well as individuals, which share information through a listserver, help to disseminate

information obtained through GAINS to other local-level organizations, participate in thematically based online discussion forums and virtual seminars which form part of the new research methodology of INSTRAW, and assist in the preparation of background and synthesis papers. Through GAINS, INSTRAW is also developing an ICT-based training methodology that combines the learning of ICT skills and their immediate application to networking, advocacy and knowledge-building around a selected gender theme that is relevant to participants. For the first time, INSTRAW held the twenty-first session of its Board of Trustees by virtual meeting, utilizing the GAINS system. It also organized a digital art contest and exhibit on the theme of women and peace, on the occasion of International Women's Day 2001.

IV. Other international organizations

77. The *International Organization for Migration (IOM)* continued to work extensively on the issue of trafficking in human beings, the main victims of which are women and girls. Its efforts to combat the scourge of trafficking focus mainly on prevention and assistance to victims. It also assisted victims of trafficking to return to their home countries, providing safe shelter and medical assistance while they waited to return and reintegration assistance to start a new life at home. Moreover, in July 2000, a global emergency fund was launched to assist trafficked women and children in countries in which there are no existing programmes to care for them. The fund provides resources for protection, return and reintegration.

78. Further, IOM established a five-year plan of action (1998-2002) that addressed the needs and concerns of migrant women on the one hand, and gender balance within the organization on the other. A network of gender focal points has been established at field missions and comprises over 80 staff members throughout the world. In addition to promoting gender mainstreaming into the activities carried out by a field mission, the gender focal points prepare yearly plans of action outlining the specific activities undertaken at their missions to implement the objectives of the gender policy. In 2001, an important initiative in gender mainstreaming was the introduction of a budget allocation for project initiatives that strengthen awareness of gender issues in the context of migration. Eight pilot projects having a specific gender dimension and a clear demonstration of the concept of gender mainstreaming are being sponsored from this budget.

V. Reported activities of non-governmental organizations and other institutions of civil society

79. Non-governmental organizations continued to pursue the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly at the local, national and international levels. While these activities were not reported systematically to the Secretariat, some are noted here as examples of the widespread follow-up activities of civil society.

80. Non-governmental organizations participated actively in the forty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, with 653 individuals representing 296 organizations attending. Prior to the session, the NGO Committee on the Status of Women held a one-day briefing on the upcoming discussion. During the session, non-governmental organizations organized most of the 129 side events held, which provided opportunities for a dialogue among representatives of government, civil society and the United Nations system. The Division for the Advancement of Women jointly sponsored two panels with non-governmental organizations, one on women, girls and HIV/AIDS together with the Medical Women's International Association, and another on gender and racial discrimination together with the Centre for Women's Global Leadership.

81. Non-governmental organizations also promoted cross-cutting dialogue during the meetings of other United Nations commissions and conferences. During the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights, for example, the Conference of Non-governmental Organizations (CONGO) organized meetings on gender and HIV/AIDS, armed conflict and women at the negotiation table and on gender, racism and sustainable development. CONGO also facilitated an event on girls as their own advocates during the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly on children, and a discussion of the African perspective on gender and HIV/AIDS during the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS. At the Third World Conference on the Least Developed Countries, non-

governmental organizations organized the event on sustainable development and selected gender items in the least developed countries. During the second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Financing for Development, the Women's Environment and Development Organization and UNIFEM brought together women from around the world to develop strategies for making the Conference proceedings more gender sensitive.

82. Substantial activity by non-governmental organizations took place in connection with the discussion by the Security Council of women, peace and security in October 2000, and with the International Women's Day 2001 under the same theme. The Hague Appeal for Peace has launched a campaign for global peace education to promote women's rights as an integral part of any peace process. International Alert spearheads a global campaign to put women's voices at the heart of peacemaking, with the title "Women Building Peace: From the Village Council to the Negotiation Table". The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom organized an event in New York which brought together 30 women from conflict zones throughout the world. The women shared best practice and discussed strategies concerning partnerships with Governments in the implementation of the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

83. To support women's advocacy, the International Women's Tribute Centre published a brochure with information on the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly, on the forty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and on upcoming global meetings. The Centre for Women's Global Leadership coordinates the annual global campaign against gender violence. In 2000, the campaign was linked to the twenty-third special session of the Assembly and to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

VI. Conclusion

84. During the period under review, the organizations of the United Nations system continued to pursue activities in follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Much attention is being focused on the implementation of the outcome of the twenty-third special session. Many organizations in the United Nations system have increased their efforts at mainstreaming a gender perspective in their work programmes.

Notes

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution I, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV, para. 4.

[4] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 7* (E/2001/27), chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution II.

[5] Ibid., draft resolution III.

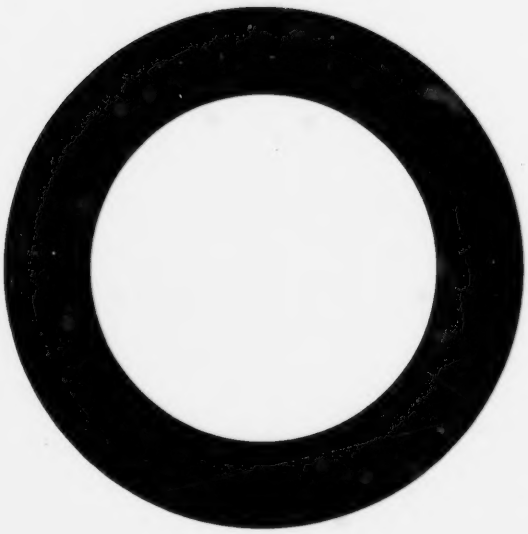
[6] Ibid., draft resolution IV.

[7] Ibid., draft resolution I.

[8] Ibid., *Supplement No. 3* (E/2001/23), chap. I, draft decision 2.

[9] Ibid., draft decision 27.

[10] Ibid., draft decision 41.



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Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Follow-up to and progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Range of tasks of the Division for the Advancement of Women

1. In its resolution 55/71 of 4 December 2000, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly on the full range of tasks of the Division of the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, including those that might arise from the implementation of the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and from the entry into force of the Optional Protocol[1] to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.[2]

2. The full range of tasks of the Division for the Advancement of Women and Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women are contained in subprogramme 2 (Gender issues and advancement of women) of section 9 (Economic and social affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. The programme of work has been formulated on the basis of subprogramme 2 of programme 7 of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005. Subsequent to the formulation of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, the General Assembly, at its twenty-third special session, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", assessed the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[3] identified obstacles and challenges thereto and proposed actions and initiatives to overcome them so as to achieve their full and accelerated implementation. In the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly and the entry into force on 22 December 2000, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention were taken into consideration.

* A/56/150.

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Subprogramme 2 (Gender issues and advancement of women) of section 9 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 will be implemented by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and by the Division for the Advancement of Women, which the Special Adviser heads (A/56/6 (sect. 9), para. 9.52).

3. In its resolution 55/71, the General Assembly called upon, inter alia, the relevant entities of the United Nations system within their respective mandates to take effective action to achieve full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly. The activities under subprogramme 2 also reflect the recommendations in that resolution.

4. In addition, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs implements activities under the regular programme of technical cooperation (section 21 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003), in support of the objectives set out in programme 7 (Economic and social affairs) of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, which includes the subprogramme on gender issues and advancement of women. Technical cooperation related to this subprogramme includes advisory services, namely, missions, at the request of Governments, to provide assistance in capacity-building for the enhancement of the participation of women in development and mainstreaming a gender perspective into national policies and programmes, as well as group training.

5. Subprogramme 2 (Gender issues and advancement of women) of section 9 (Economic and social affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 reflects an increase in regular posts owing to the proposed establishment of three new posts (one P-4 human rights officer, one P-2 associate legal officer and one General Service (Other level) secretary) to undertake various tasks related to the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly and tasks resulting from the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention. An additional increase has been included for non-post resources, such as general temporary assistance during peak workload periods in the establishment of the Optional Protocol. Expenses for additional consultants and expert group meetings are also foreseen in the biennium 2002-2003 and will include studies on the implementation of the Platform of Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly resolutions.[4]

6. Additional resources have been requested to meet the enhanced responsibilities of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women under the Optional Protocol. A five-member working group of the Committee will meet prior to each session to determine the admissibility of communications and make recommendations on their merits. With respect to the inquiry procedure established under the Optional Protocol, it is expected that the Committee will undertake three missions of inquiry annually, each for a period of two weeks.

7. The draft programme of work in the field of gender issues and advancement of women for the biennium 2002-2003 has been considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fifth session, in compliance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. By its decision 45/105,[5] the Commission recommended that the Committee for Programme and Coordination, when reviewing the relevant section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002 to 2003, take into consideration the outcome of the discussions of the Commission at its forty-fifth session.[6]

8. Demands placed on the Division are expanding. There has been an increase in the number of activities and output in the Division's core functions of policy analysis and research, substantive servicing of intergovernmental meetings, substantive and technical servicing of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a human rights treaty body, and advisory services and technical cooperation, as well as coordination and outreach. The increased demands stem from the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly and the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which has now been ratified or acceded to by 24 States parties. Other factors that have contributed to the increased workload are: (a) the increase in the number of States parties to the Convention by 22 since 1 September 1995, and the necessity for enhanced servicing of and provision of legal analysis to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women which has met twice a year since January 1997; (b) an increase in the number of requests

for information and training activities; (c) a sustained high level of interest by civil society in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Division since the convening of the Fourth World Conference on Women; and (d) the call for more in-depth coverage and outreach, including through electronic means of communication. Additional tasks include specific activities related to gender mainstreaming under the guidance of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and violence against women, including the launch of an international "zero tolerance" campaign on such violence,[7] and activities with respect to trafficking of women and girls.

9. Efforts are being made in the context of the subprogramme to strengthen national capabilities for enhancing understanding of women's rights and the process of implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and to strengthen national capacity in the conceptualization, formulation and implementation of action-oriented national plans and programmes designed to implement the Platform for Action. The challenge ahead for the Division is to fulfil its mandate, including the new tasks assigned to it as a result of the recommendations of the Assembly at its twenty-third special session, the greater acceptance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

Notes

[1] General Assembly resolution 54/4, annex.

[2] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

[3] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[4] General Assembly resolutions S-23/2, annex, and S-23/3, annex.

[5] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 7* (E/2001/27), chap. II, sect. B.

[6] Ibid., annex III.

[7] In accordance with paragraph 87 (b) of the annex to General Assembly resolution S-23/3.

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Operational activities for development: triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/1 of 10 July 2001. A comprehensive analysis of the implementation of resolution 53/192 is included in addendum 1 to this report and is complemented by the report of the Secretary-General on the progress in the implementation of the multi-year funding frameworks (MYFFs) and evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (A/56/70-E/2001/58), and on the comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for development for the year 1999 (A/56/70/Add.1-E/2001/58/Add.1), and the preliminary report of the Secretary-General on comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for the year 2000 (A/56/70/Add.2).

* A/56/50.

** The report was finalized taking into account the views expressed by Member States at the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council on the formulation of policy recommendations.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/192 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/1 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. It is complemented by the report of the Secretary-General on the progress in the implementation of the multi-year funding frameworks (MYFFs) and evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (A/56/70-E/2001/58), already submitted to the Council at its substantive session of 2001, and by two addenda containing comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for development, for 1999 (A/56/70/Add.1-E/2001/58/Add.1) and 2000 (A/56/70/Add.2).

2. This report is a synopsis, which summarizes a more detailed analysis and assessment of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192 presented in addendum 1 (A/56/320/Add.1). It highlights the conclusions reached in that analysis and outlines the challenges facing United Nations development cooperation. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/1, the report includes recommendations on the role and responsibilities for development of the United Nations system for consideration by the General Assembly. Those recommendations take into account the views expressed by Member States during the debate on the triennial comprehensive policy review at the Council's substantive session of 2001 on the basis of an interim report (E/2001/66) and additional information provided by system organizations. The main underlying assumption of the analysis and the recommendations is that United Nations development cooperation operates on the basis of the principles of universality, neutrality and country specificity, and its objective is to provide a coherent and integrated response to national development efforts in full respect of national priorities.

II. Global challenges to United Nations development cooperation

3. The present triennial policy review provides an important opportunity for dialogue among Member States on the future of United Nations development cooperation. The review is taking place at a critical juncture in development cooperation and is the first of its kind since the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[1] which identified challenging time-bound targets, and, as such, offers a key frame of reference for the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Recent global conferences and the Millennium Declaration have helped define and focus the United Nations development agenda. As was highlighted in the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2001, although the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration is primarily a responsibility of Member States, the United Nations development system can contribute significantly to assisting member countries in achieving the development goals agreed upon in the Millennium Declaration.

4. The operational activities for development of the United Nations system need to respond to a continuously changing global context. The debate at the 2001 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council underlined some of the trends affecting the world economic situation. Globalization, liberalization, technological change and the need for developing countries to integrate into the world economy represent major challenges for development as well as for the role and content of the United Nations operational activities.

5. The United Nations Millennium Declaration recognized globalization as the central challenge of our times. In a world where problems of extreme poverty and disease rooted in inequality and conflicts still threaten the entire human family, and where the benefits of globalization are not equally distributed and many countries and social groups have no access to them, the United Nations development system is called upon to assist developing countries in enhancing their own capacities to address the complex dimensions of globalization so that they can take advantage of the new opportunities and enormous potential for growth created by it, in order to reduce poverty. The system is also required to place poverty eradication at the centre of its development support efforts.

6. In this global environment, new technologies, such as information and communication technologies (ICT), provide new opportunities and represent a potentially crucial vehicle for economic development and empowerment.[2] With the right mix of public policies and knowledge infrastructure, these

technologies can help programme countries to overcome or mitigate traditional development gaps, and prevent the risk of their being marginalized from the globalization process. On the other hand, the access to these technologies is not evenly distributed. As emphasized in the agreed conclusions of the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council adopted in 2001 (E/2001/L.16), the United Nations system can play a key role in helping to bridge the digital divide, by promoting transfer of technology to developing countries and accelerating access to information knowledge for developing countries.

7. The United Nations system is thus called upon to play an enhanced development role to meet new global challenges, and the scope of its development cooperation continues to expand as new tasks are added. For example, the scope of operational activities has increased to include situations where conflict and post-conflict conditions exist, requiring new and more flexible response capacity. Pressing demands for support arise in new and cross-cutting areas in order to: (a) strengthen capacity-building and enable developing countries to better integrate in the world economy, (b) help translate and adapt international development goals and objectives to the national context and develop concrete programmes at the country level and (c) respond to new political, humanitarian and socio-economic challenges. Issues such as governance, humanitarian assistance, and various aspects of peace-building and conflict prevention have acquired greater prominence. Traditional boundaries between normative functioning and standard-setting, advocacy and technical assistance have become less clearly defined.

8. The United Nations development system is expected to adapt and respond flexibly and in a timely fashion to the new development challenges. Its development cooperation interacts with a wider range of stakeholders than in the past, since the role of Governments in the productive process is changing in most countries. In this context, the system is expected to intensify its internal coordination, while ensuring a coherent and integrated response to national development needs. Although its development architecture and culture have constantly evolved over the last 50 years, proving to be remarkably resilient, the United Nations system would not be able to face the current challenges without further challenging itself.

9. To face these powerful challenges, the United Nations country teams may need to upgrade, in light of national priorities and needs, their capacities in order to be able to make an optimal use of the resources and specific comparative advantages of the United Nations system organizations. A different mix of skills, expertise, services and working methods may be required at the country level.

Recommendation 1

The General Assembly may wish to reaffirm the universal, neutral, multilateral and grant character of United Nations operational activities. It may wish to emphasize the need to strengthen the operational role of the United Nations development system in assisting programme countries, at their request, to respond more effectively to the economic and social impact of globalization and to better integrate in the world economy, so as to accelerate their growth and development and reduce poverty. It may wish to call upon the organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen and adapt their strategies and activities and enhance their coordination and collaboration, taking into account the need to assist programme countries in the follow-up to international development goals of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations and major United Nations global conferences.

Recommendation 2

The General Assembly may wish to acknowledge the opportunity represented by ICT to accelerate development and empower programme countries. It may wish to encourage the United Nations system to support, through its operational activities for development, national efforts to acquire the capacities and infrastructure required to mobilize ICT and put ICT at the service of development, inter alia, through a more intensive use of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) modalities.

The General Assembly may also wish to note that information technologies offer a significant opportunity as a means to support more effectively the delivery of development

cooperation by the United Nations system and accordingly encourage their use.

The General Assembly may wish to encourage all system organizations to collaborate with the recently established ICT Task Force, inter alia, through financial support, and request the Secretary-General to report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2002 on progress achieved in using operational activities to support ICT.

Recommendation 3

The General Assembly may wish to request the United Nations system organizations to review, in consultation with the concerned Governments, the technical skill profiles of their operational divisions and country offices, in order to ensure that they have access to the mix of expertise and technical knowledge, including ICT knowledge, required to respond to the requests of support from programme countries facing their current development and global challenges.

The General Assembly may also wish to request the organizations of the United Nations system to review, individually and collectively, the adequacy of the skill profiles of their country offices and subregional or regional support systems, introduce appropriate organizational adjustments, including necessary collaboration with other partners, and report, through the Secretary-General, on this subject to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, in the context of the triennial policy review, through the Economic and Social Council.

III. Global challenges, finance for development, management reforms and funding operational activities for development

10. The global challenges recognized by Member States in the United Nations Millennium Declaration require the mobilization of considerable financial resources, both domestic and international, to achieve the international development goals and, more generally, to finance the development process of developing countries. Domestically, these resources can be generated by a variety of mechanisms, ranging from the savings-investment process to other forms of domestic resource mobilization. External capital flows — in particular long-term flows such as foreign direct investment (FDI) — can play an important role in complementing domestic resources by transferring resources from capital-surplus to capital-importing countries, although there are risks associated with the volatility of short-term financial flows. Flows of external capital and domestic resource mobilization are facilitated by trade liberalization and economic integration, which in turn depend on the expansion and diversification of productive capacities. Rapid trade liberalization can yield heavy adjustment costs in the short and medium term. Moreover, in a liberalized trade situation, commodity-dependent countries are particularly affected by the excessive volatility in commodity prices.

11. International financial cooperation for development and other forms of international official financing (including external debt management measures) play an important role in situations in which there are inadequate domestic resources, insufficient foreign private capital flows and structural imbalances in trade relations. International development cooperation in the form of either official development assistance (ODA) or other forms of official assistance can be an important catalyst to stimulate investment and domestic funding, an essential provider of global public goods and services and a primary source of relief in humanitarian crisis. If applied through appropriate technical assistance and capacity-building activities, development cooperation can be a basic means to promote and accelerate processes of recovery and development, especially in least developed countries and in other lower- or middle-income countries in urgent need of assistance to improve their trading position and growth potentials.

12. The role of the United Nations in this domain has been highlighted in the preparatory work of the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, planned for March 2002, which aims at defining a strategy for a better mobilization of resources for development. The United Nations, together with the Bretton Woods institutions and other international organizations, can play a central role in facilitating the management of global economic

integration, helping to develop adequate policy responses by the developing countries and promoting a broad-based and participatory dialogue among all development partners to orient international efforts to ensure that globalization contributes to development.

13. Although programme countries still view the United Nations system as a valued partner, with a comparative advantage in numerous areas, the United Nations development system will have to play its role in a more intensely competitive environment, with a broader development agenda and with reduced resources.

14. The reform process launched in 1997, on the premise that it would lead to enhanced and more stable development cooperation funding, aimed at a more effective and efficient use of available resources through better management. In the past few years, the organizations of the system have carried out far-reaching reforms and internal reorganizations, with the intent of maximizing programme impact, minimizing administrative costs, fostering greater coordination and coherence, and ensuring more efficient and strategic-oriented decision-making processes. All these initiatives have started to have a positive impact on the effectiveness and relevance of the United Nations operational activities.

15. One basic objective of these United Nations system initiatives was to achieve greater internal synergy and impact through a more integrated and collaborative approach to development cooperation, by intensifying interaction among system organizations through improved inter-agency modalities (including the establishment of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG)), streamlining the strategic direction of operational activities through goal-oriented collaboration and programmatic coherence (with the introduction of processes such as the common country assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), with measures to strengthen the United Nations resident coordinator system and the cohesion of United Nations country teams, as well as common premises and integrated information services, providing a harmonized/unified image of the system's presence at the country level, and expanding the dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions and other international financial institutions. The introduction of MYFFs[3] and the reinforcement of results-based management are steps towards more efficient programming, monitoring and evaluation.

16. With these reforms in place, the United Nations system is posed to play an effective role as an advocate and as an agent of change and development. CCA and UNDAF have created the basis to improve planning and delivery of services as well as monitoring and evaluation of operational activities. A strengthened resident coordinator system and sharing of premises and services will contribute to optimal utilization of resources and enhanced efficiency. The efforts to harmonize these tools with the Government's policies and planning should improve results and generate national ownership of programmes and projects.

17. Nevertheless, availability of adequate resources for operational activities is an essential condition for sustaining the momentum of these reforms and enhancing efficiency and impact. Funding operational activities should be sufficient, stable and carried out on a predictable and assured basis. Regular or core resources should continue to be the foundation of operational activities, if their multilateral and neutral character is to be preserved.

18. The challenges posed by global integration, the need to pursue international development goals and the expanding scope of operational activities amount to an impressive agenda for the United Nations development system but, if the resources required to respond meaningfully to these challenges are not available, this agenda is likely to remain unfulfilled.

19. While the global challenges and agenda have translated into a sustained demand for United Nations development support and a continuous call for an effective and efficient use of its resources, the deterioration of funding for United Nations operational activities, especially core funding, sends a contradictory message regarding the intentions of the Member States. Resources remain insecure, unstable, stagnant, volatile and vulnerable, threatening to result in unfulfilled needs and underutilized potentials and capacities of the United Nations development system.

20. Despite the frequent emphasis on the need to expand long-term development support to countries struggling to integrate in the world economy, the system's capacity to provide this support is hindered by the growing preference of contributing countries for short-term and dedicated development funding. This trend often resulted in the failure to reach a critical

mass of resources required for long-term development cooperation and compromised the efficient use of funds towards a more integrated development support. The introduction of MYFFs has not managed to reverse the negative trends in core funding. Core or regular non-conditional voluntary funding in many organizations has fallen far behind the projections made by the Member States, for example, in the Executive Boards of United Nations funds and programmes, while non-core or earmarked funding has grown. Moreover, financial support to United Nations development cooperation still comes from a limited number of donors, and efforts to broaden the donor base have not yet yielded the expected results. The analysis in addendum 1 to this report shows that the financial situation of United Nations development cooperation has hardly improved during the past three years.

21. A United Nations development system, including the specialized agencies, deprived of critical funding for technical cooperation, as well as for less traditional activities such as social advocacy, economic reforms and the pursuit of global themes, is also deprived of its potential to support national development efforts and exercise its catalytic role in facilitating the integration of developing countries in the world economy. What is at stake is not only the country-level infrastructure of United Nations development support, which was built over decades and has, so far, been considered an invaluable contribution to national development by both the international community and programme countries, but also the very capacity of the United Nations system to facilitate a collective response of the international community to the challenge of globalization, and ensure that globalization becomes a positive force benefiting all peoples in respect of the principles of human dignity, equality and equity.

22. It is therefore necessary to reach a renewed consensus and commitment on financing United Nations development cooperation and to place it on a more secure, stable and predictable footing, in the pursuit of the United Nations development agenda. The forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development provides an opportunity to achieve a breakthrough in this area. A full consideration of this central issue in the triennial review should lay the foundation for building renewed and real consensus to reverse the present trends and achieve a substantive and sustained increase in the funding for operational activities for development.

Recommendation 4

While acknowledging the progress achieved to improve the functioning of the United Nations development system and the need to continue efforts in that direction, the General Assembly may wish to re-emphasize the need for a substantial and sustained increase in the core or regular resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continued and assured basis in order to assist developing countries in facing the challenges of globalization and integration in the world economy and make progress towards international development goals. The Assembly may also express concern that there has not been, so far, any significant change in the resource situation of operational activities and may recommend to the Economic and Social Council to consider, at its substantive session of 2003, the conclusions that will be reached at its triennial policy review and at the International Conference on Financing for Development planned for 2002 and review progress on the issue of funding of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

IV. A platform for the future: integration in national efforts and national ownership

23. The management reforms introduced in recent years in the United Nations system aimed at greater internal coherence and coordination in United Nations development cooperation. The impact of these measures is examined in the following sections, which focus on outstanding issues related to the intergovernmental oversight of operational activities, lessons learned from their impact evaluation, strategic frameworks for programming, and questions related to the field-level coordination of operational activities.

24. The views expressed by Member States at the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council, as well as by the executive heads, the country teams and other representatives of system organizations, and the analysis undertaken in preparation of the triennial review, lead to the important conclusion that, in order to meet the new demands of support, it is not sufficient to reform the

United Nations system management structures and enhance internal coordination and coherence. In order to face the global challenges cited in the previous sections, the focus on internal coherence in the 1997 reform, which emphasized the notion of "collaborative programming and close consultation with Governments",[4] should now be taken to a higher level. In order to become more relevant in facing the global challenges, development support provided by the United Nations system should aim at a much closer integration with national development policies and programmes.

25. A more integrated approach has two dimensions: a better integration of national development efforts, and the closer integration of external assistance with national programmes. Regarding the first, a review of national approaches to development shows that there is a need to overcome the fragmented approach to national development programming and redesign social and economic policies in a more harmonized and coherent way. The challenge for the United Nations system is to provide support to programme countries in integrating national policies and programmes as part of their own efforts to integrate into the world economy, while attenuating the social, environmental and economic imbalances that this integration may entail. The United Nations system should pursue goals and devise strategies in response to national priorities that take account of the interdependence between global and national dimensions, global themes and country specificity, with the aim of remaining relevant and responsive to national development.

26. Regarding the second dimension of integration, consistent with the guidance repeatedly provided by the General Assembly,[5] external support of the United Nations system (and other international partners) should be translated into country-led development initiatives. Greater integration of development cooperation in national efforts should become the "leitmotif" for United Nations development cooperation, ensuring the continuing involvement and leadership of national authorities in programming and managing operational activities and a more intensive dialogue with the relevant constituencies in recipient countries.

27. In the debate at the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council, Member States repeatedly stressed the need to link the demand for increased coordination of operational activities of the United Nations system with full national ownership of development cooperation supported by the United Nations system (and other sources), and national leadership in its coordination. The increasing demand for national ownership of development cooperation requires integrating cooperation activities with national development efforts, so that external assistance does not generate separate development structures or initiatives, but is fully absorbed into national endeavours, under the leadership and monitoring of national authorities.

28. The focus of operational activities of the United Nations system should shift from internal coordination of development assistance to integration into national efforts. Therefore, the system should shift from information exchange to shared programmes not only within the system but with the Government and other stakeholders, from process-focused reforms to increased attention to substantive content of development support, from narrowly focused project execution to capacity-building, from internal system coherence to greater development impact on recipient countries. It is necessary to move beyond coordination among system organizations and common premises of United Nations country offices to coherence with national policies and programmes. There is a need to look beyond the paradigms of harmonized programming to focus on integrated country-driven policy frameworks with the highest degree of national participation. Modalities and mechanisms introduced in the course of the past reforms (for example, the programme approach, capacity-building, national execution and UNDAF) should now be transformed into instruments for integration into national processes.

Recommendation 5

In accordance with its resolutions 53/192, 50/120, 47/199 and 44/211, the General Assembly may wish to reiterate that national plans and priorities constitute the only viable frame of reference for United Nations system national programming of operational activities at the country level and urge the United Nations development system, in order to assist programme countries in meeting the current challenges of globalization and international development goals, to integrate its country-level operations in national policies and programmes under the leadership and with full

participation of the Government, full involvement of national structures and institutions and dialogue with all relevant stakeholders. The Assembly may also wish to request that a report be submitted for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2003, on progress achieved in this regard.

V. Intergovernmental oversight of operational activities

29. Effective intergovernmental oversight and control are at the heart of the efficient and effective functioning of operational activities and their conformity with the basic principles and "fundamental characteristics" of the United Nations system (universality, voluntary and grant nature, neutrality, multilateralism and flexibility), as repeatedly reaffirmed by the General Assembly. As part of the efforts to restructure and revitalize the work of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, the Assembly, in its resolution 48/162, revisited the functions of three key governing bodies of the United Nations that are relevant in this area: the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes, the Economic and Social Council and the Assembly itself. Accordingly, the Boards function under the overall policy guidance of the Assembly and under the authority of the Council. They should implement policies formulated by the Assembly, under the coordination and guidance of the Council. The Boards should also recommend new initiatives to the Council and, through the Council, to the Assembly, as necessary.

30. The General Assembly's policy role is mainly exercised through the triennial policy review resolutions, while the Economic and Social Council discharges its coordination responsibilities through a number of channels, such as its consideration of the annual reports of the Executive Boards, the consolidated list of issues prepared by UNDG, joint meetings of the Boards and, most importantly, through the operational activities segment of its substantive sessions, when progress reports on the implementation of the triennial policy review resolutions are discussed.

31. The complexity of the current demands placed on United Nations system development cooperation, in the context of globalization and international development, may require a stronger role for the Economic and Social Council in the area of operational activities for development.

32. In recent years, the Economic and Social Council has emerged as a strategic and vibrant forum that brings together the entire United Nations system, including the finance and trade institutions, to address major issues of international economic cooperation. The Council thus has the potential for bringing together key officials dealing with development cooperation and offering an opportunity to integrate the debate on operational activities of the United Nations system with the broader consideration of international development cooperation. The challenge of integrating development cooperation in national development efforts, identified in the previous section as a possible leitmotif for the future, requires the interaction of a variety of interlocutors, at the intergovernmental level. The Council could provide a forum where high-level policy makers directly involved in development cooperation would discuss the integration of global development cooperation issues in national development efforts. This forum could be a unique opportunity for a substantive dialogue among these key stakeholders, not only on the critical issues but also on the overall direction and orientations of development cooperation, and provide overall guidance to the United Nations system and the governing bodies of its organizations.

33. In order to realize this potential of the Economic and Social Council, the participation in the operational activities segment would have to be at a high level and be extended to a wider range of stakeholders, in addition to representatives of Governments and the United Nations system, so as to include key representatives of official institutions in programme countries directly involved in development cooperation, as well as international development assistance partners (that is to say, bilateral aid institutions and other multilateral agencies) and, where appropriate, representatives of the civil society and the private sector. The dialogue on development cooperation, in the context of the Council's operational activities segment, should be designed to encourage a greater harmonization of policies, instruments and procedures of all external partners involved in development cooperation, as a basis for a more

effective integration of all external assistance into national development.

Recommendation 6

While reiterating the contents of its resolution 48/162, which details the respective functions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards of the United Nations funds and programmes, the Assembly may wish to encourage the Council to strengthen its role as a forum for reflection as well as for consideration of and overall guidance on operational activities for development, including of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and that originating from non-governmental organizations and the private sector, with the objective of promoting a more effective integration of development cooperation into national development efforts.

In enhancing the Economic and Social Council's oversight role in the area of operational activities, the General Assembly may also wish to request the Council to emphasize its focus on lessons learned and impact evaluations in the implementation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in the wider context of all forms of development cooperation, and provide, on the basis of these evaluations, the governing bodies of United Nations system organizations, in particular the Executive Boards of the United Nations funds and programmes, with appropriate policy guidance on orientations, reforms, and undertakings that these organizations are expected to pursue in order to ensure that a more effective and integrated response to the needs and priorities of recipient countries is given through their operational activities for development.

VI. Strategic frameworks

34. The United Nations Millennium Declaration underscores the multidimensional characteristics of the challenges that developing countries face in the context of interdependence, globalization, and other global development issues. A necessary consequence of this complexity is the need for each developing country to define its own comprehensive country strategy which identifies, in a holistic approach, a long-term vision of its development goals and establish a link among the objectives, targets and interactions that the country intends to pursue to achieve the overarching aims of sustainable development and poverty reduction.

35. In recent years, the international community has created multiple country-level development strategies and frameworks, which go in this direction and involve a variety of actors. These strategies and frameworks frequently overlap. They all generate the expectation that recipient countries will either respond to them or will have a lead role in conceiving, formulating and implementing them.

36. In the case of the United Nations system, two specific strategic frameworks and programming tools have acquired a prominent role, CCA and UNDAF, which aim at enhancing coherence in operational activities and better responding to the national priorities in an integrated and harmonized way. These tools are the response of the system to the many calls, also by the General Assembly (for example, in the context of the triennial policy review), to improve coordination of the United Nations development operations and their programming at the country level, which is considered an essential step towards increasing their effectiveness.

37. With the 1997 reform, high expectations were attached to the introduction of UNDAF, which provides a launching pad to bring about greater coherence and synergy in the programming processes of the United Nations system at the country level. The role of UNDAF and CCA, and the results achieved in their implementation during the past three years, are presented in addendum 1 to this report and, in more detail, in a separate report, which contains an evaluation of these instruments.[6] Both tools have been able to reflect the broad concerns for international development highlighted in the global conferences of the last decade, and represent an attempt to effect a bridge between those concerns and development priorities identified at the country level by national Governments. The increasing awareness, both at the country and at the global level, of the challenges that interdependency and globalization generate in the context of development policies, and the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration by the leaders of the world's nations, provide an opportunity to focus the orientations of these two instruments in

such a way as to better assist developing countries in meeting their goals to reduce poverty and achieve equitable and sustainable development in an increasingly interdependent world.

38. The experience accumulated in a number of countries where these tools have been applied shows that notable advances have been made, that the system is working more coherently at the country level and that UNDAF can be a major tool to induce greater coherence and synergy in the operational activities for development of the United Nations system at the country level.

39. The evaluation of UNDAF has identified different levels of its impact, on both the United Nations system and the recipient countries. In general, the process of formulating UNDAF has strengthened the team spirit within the United Nations at the country level, although a lot remains to be done, especially since the basic paradigms of identity and autonomy of each organization, with separate programming and administrative structures and procedures, continue. A positive impact of UNDAF on country-level system activities should enhance consistency and complementarity among different country programmes and other similar instruments used by United Nations organizations and other development partners. Although there is evidence of some progress in this area, only future evaluations can determine the extent to which this objective has been attained.

40. In order to be relevant in development terms, UNDAF should serve not only as a framework for country programmes of the United Nations system organizations but also as a broader instrument to assist programme countries in achieving their own development goals, including in response to the global challenges identified in several international forums, counting also the Millennium Declaration.

41. When the UNDAF process is based on a good CCA, and both processes are conceived as participatory processes, conducted with full involvement of national partners, they represent an important opportunity to achieve the goal of integrating operational activities in national plans and objectives. By reviewing and analysing the national development situation, identifying key country development issues and allowing a consistent definition of priority areas, CCA can serve as a basic step towards supporting national Governments in formulating their own national policies and better coordinating external assistance, while UNDAF should provide a more coherent integrated response of the United Nations system to national development priorities.

42. The link between CCA and UNDAF, on the one hand, and the country strategy, on the other, that national authorities should define in order to face global development challenges is adequately established if CCA and UNDAF, together with all other frameworks formulated in other contexts (comprehensive development framework (CDF), poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), sustainable development strategies, integrated frameworks for trade-related technical assistance (IF) etc.), converge towards a nationally defined development strategy that is nationally owned and relies on a full partnership of relevant national and external stakeholders.

43. General Assembly resolution 53/192 emphasized national ownership and full government participation as basic requirements for the formulation of an UNDAF that is consistent with national priorities. The same resolution also noted the importance of closer consultation, in the formulation of UNDAF, with a variety of stakeholders, including relevant development partners.

44. The external evaluation of UNDAF shows that the degree of government involvement in the countries where this process was launched has, so far, been uneven. The involvement of other national development partners in the UNDAF process appears to be still limited.

45. As underlined by many Member States at the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council, a condition for a greater integration of these frameworks in the national development processes is a greater involvement of the Government and other national partners in all stages of their formulation and implementation. National involvement means developing a partnership that engages the entire country, from the Government to its legislative structures, its civil society from the national to the community levels, and the private sector. In his consultations with the World Bank, the Secretary-General has recently underlined that effective development cooperation must be founded on the principle of genuine country ownership of comprehensive strategies that address the many dimensions of poverty and sustainable development,

and that national Governments must be in the driver's seat in determining what are the best strategies for their countries to adopt in order to reduce poverty. National ownership is a key indication that the Government accepts full responsibility for coordinating development cooperation and exerts its leadership in determining the development agenda of its country.

46. Moreover, a better dialogue must also be established with all relevant external partners (bilateral donors and other multilateral institutions). Such a broad dialogue is required in order to establish a climate of trust and respect among all stakeholders, while preserving the ultimate responsibility of national Governments for defining national priorities.

47. The capacity of UNDAF and CCA to exert a positive impact on recipient countries also depends on the good quality of the technical work that accompanies these processes. Adequate monitoring must be exerted and improvements in the technical capacities of field offices and national counterpart units should be introduced, as appropriate. Most importantly, these frameworks represent unique opportunities to build analytical and coordination capacities of national partners. To build national capacities in coordination functions should become an essential condition when implementing these processes and should be one of the key ways in which effective national involvement and ownership are pursued. The United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, should collaborate in order to strengthen government capacity so that the Government itself is in charge of all these processes.

48. The concern, also expressed in the debate of the Economic and Social Council at its 2001 substantive session, that there are too many country-level coordination frameworks requires further attention. The proliferation of these strategic frameworks aims at improving coordination but may generate an excessive burden both for the programme countries and for the country staff of the United Nations system as well as other multilateral and bilateral institutions, resulting in higher transaction costs for development cooperation. Some progress could be made by ensuring consistency and coherence among all these frameworks, in both their processes and the resulting documents, and also through better sequencing and harmonization of the activities required by each process, in order to optimize the use of time, information and skilled human resources.

49. Nevertheless, the very existence of a variety of frameworks entails the risk of overlapping and duplicating, unless the Government is truly in charge of designing and coordinating both its own national development strategy and the corresponding development cooperation policy and programmes through a "national development framework", to which all external partners will refer. The key to achieving this ultimate result is the determination of the country to take full responsibility for its own development future. When this is achieved, many operations in separate instruments or frameworks that show a great degree of complementarity and overlap may be unified under the umbrella of the nationally led frameworks, where the necessary country analysis and development strategy will be found.

50. This does not mean that all the varieties of tools and frameworks will necessarily disappear. Different external interlocutors may utilize the same national development framework to prepare their own specific documents or frameworks, if so required for coordination, managerial and institutional purposes, inter alia, for the accountability requirements of each organization. In particular, on the basis of nationally owned strategies, both bilateral donors and multilateral institutions can develop, with the full participation of the Government, their own "business plan", as is the case for UNDAF, which can be considered the business plan of the entire United Nations system in a country, the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) of the World Bank, and other frameworks more specific for individual organizations of the United Nations or a group of them. As a business plan, UNDAF will become the tool for a more effective harmonization of country programmes of individual system organizations. CCA, in turn, is essentially a contribution of the United Nations system to the assessment of development priorities and should be considered an input into the definition of the development strategy of the country. Its use may be very valuable, in the absence of similar analytical exercises at the country level, especially by linking overall global objectives with country-level priorities. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by the presentation of the country team of the United Republic of Tanzania at the 2001 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, the need to launch a formal CCA may be superseded by the availability of other analytical frameworks that the Government has meanwhile produced and used.

Recommendation 7

The General Assembly may wish to take note of the national experiences so far undertaken with respect to the introduction of UNDAF and CCA as attempts to induce greater coherence and synergy in the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level, and may wish to encourage the United Nations system to orient future activities in the conduct of these two processes as efforts to provide better responses to national development priorities and policies, provided that both the UNDAF and CCA processes are conducted in full consultation and agreement with the Governments concerned.

In this context, the General Assembly may wish to reiterate that the major responsibility in coordinating external development assistance in general, and operational activities for development of the United Nations system in particular, lies with the national Governments of programme countries, and may wish to re-emphasize that all coordinating activities, including the formulation of strategic coordination frameworks, such as UNDAF and CCA, require the full involvement of national Governments and other national stakeholders in order to ensure that development cooperation activities are country-driven and better integrated in national development policies and priorities.

The General Assembly may wish to stress that national ownership of UNDAF and CCA requires full government participation and leadership in all stages of these processes, and may wish to encourage, in the framework of these processes, the establishment of an open dialogue with civil society and local institutions, in agreement with, and under the guidance of, the respective national Governments.

In pursuing these objectives, the General Assembly may wish to request the United Nations system to intensify capacity-building initiatives to support national Governments in their function of coordinating all forms of external assistance, including that received from the United Nations system, and also through a more effective involvement of programme countries in the management of all forms of strategic coordination frameworks.

In this respect, the General Assembly may also wish to request the Secretary-General to undertake an evaluation of the results achieved with these two processes and to report to the Assembly thereon at its fifty-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council, in the context of the triennial policy review.

Recommendation 8

The General Assembly may wish to recommend that, when the UNDAF and CCA processes are undertaken, they should aim at producing enhanced consistency and complementarity of country programmes and other similar instruments in individual system organizations, in full integration with national plans and objectives, and that necessary measures be adopted by the United Nations development system to simplify and harmonize programming and country assessment procedures in order to reduce transaction costs to recipient countries by avoiding additional procedural requirements and workload which may cause a burden for programme countries.

The General Assembly may also wish to call on the United Nations development system and other relevant institutions to work towards the harmonization of existing coordinating frameworks launched by multilateral institutions, avoiding duplication of efforts, improving sequencing among frameworks and encouraging full collaboration among them, under the leadership of national Governments, to achieve such harmonization.

The General Assembly may also wish to urge the United Nations development system and encourage other development cooperation institutions to orient these processes so that they primarily aim at generating effective benefits for the recipient countries, and request that the final objective of these strategic instruments be the integration of development cooperation in the national development policies and programmes. In that respect, the Assembly may wish to encourage the United Nations development system and other multilateral institutions to support, upon their request, efforts of programme countries in formulating their own national

development strategies, and make all possible efforts to adjust their development cooperation tools and frameworks to, and integrate them with, these nationally defined strategies.

VII. Impact evaluation of operational activities

51. The United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000 contains a statement of values, principles and objectives for the international development agenda for the twenty-first century, which will have a profound impact on the contents and direction of the operational activities of the United Nations system in the years ahead. It also provides important benchmarks for systemic monitoring and evaluation. The challenge is now to translate programmes and strategies into action, in an attempt to achieve concrete development results. Developing countries need to develop or continue to refine their own capacity to monitor their own policies and programmes and their implementation, using appropriate methods and indicators. Similarly, the international community will monitor progress in achieving the overall goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The translation of the Millennium Declaration goals into targets to be used at the country and regional levels requires further work. The big challenge of the years ahead is to ensure that strategies pursue the adopted path, and development results are achieved. This applies also to the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Several organizations of the United Nations system have introduced results-based management, in order to establish or reinforce a framework of accountability of their performance in supporting programme countries in achieving their own development targets.

52. In line with this approach, the current policy review of operational activities is predicated, inter alia, on the findings of a series of impact evaluation studies, conducted by the United Nations in response to General Assembly resolution 53/192, paragraph 53, and assessing the extent to which the expected objectives of United Nations development cooperation have been attained. The latest series of evaluations, which followed a first pilot series discussed in the previous triennial comprehensive policy review, focused on the impact of United Nations system support on capacity-building and poverty eradication in six countries. A more detailed presentation of these studies and their findings can be found in addendum 1 to this report.[7]

53. From the work done so far, the following broad inferences could be drawn:

(a) The United Nations system operational activities, with the right policy mix, can play an important and significant role in poverty reduction, and the system's support to capacity-building has been an important element in that process;

(b) The resources available, either internally or externally, for poverty reduction are still inadequate. A minimum level of resources is required to ensure success in capacity-building for poverty eradication. When this condition is met, the gains that can be obtained nationally, regionally and globally by using increased resources in genuine poverty reduction should be considerable;

(c) There is a close relationship between capacity-building and national ownership of operational activities for development, at both the conceptual/planning and implementation stages. It is essential to ensure the appropriate involvement of national organizations, including local beneficiaries and government authorities, in planning and implementing operational activities, as well as in evaluating their effectiveness, since only then can a significant impact be expected;

(d) The recent General Assembly legislation prompted system-wide guidelines on capacity-building as a central objective of operational activities for development for the entire United Nations system. Yet, the impact evaluation studies conducted by the United Nations suggest that capacity-building is still seen as an area reserved to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);

(e) The United Nations system has helped in the conceptual evolution of capacity-building from human resource development to institution-building and organizational development. The International Labour Organization (ILO), UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have all contributed to changing the concept of poverty so that it now includes the dimensions of human capabilities and participation. Nevertheless, the relation between poverty eradication and the capacity-building needed to

address it is an area that still requires further progress, in order to develop a coherent system-wide approach;

(f) The impact evaluations also showed that the pursuit of poverty eradication as a central goal for the system could be linked, in a more structural way, to the development role played by each system organization. The lack of a clear link leaves a certain lack of clarity regarding the way to tackle poverty eradication through specific strategies, the consistency of approaches and the appropriateness of means and skills made available by each organization. The pursuit of poverty eradication needs to be conceived, not as a remedial or compensatory initiative, but as the outcome of policies and programmes that promote inclusive economic growth and overall social development.

Recommendation 9

The General Assembly may wish to request the United Nations system organizations to review their efforts in implementing the relevant provisions of its resolutions 53/192 and 50/120 with respect to using capacity-building as a goal of technical assistance provided through their operational activities, and to report to the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2002, through the Secretary-General, on the results achieved in this area.

Recommendation 10

The General Assembly may wish to take note of the impact evaluations of capacity-building and poverty eradication undertaken according to Assembly resolution 53/192, requesting system organizations to review the conclusions reached by these evaluations and the lessons learned in the light of their own experience, and to report to the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2002, through the Secretary-General, on the results of this review.

The General Assembly may also wish to request that the impact evaluation activity be continued on a more extensive scale, covering a larger sample of countries, and urge donor countries to provide the necessary support for this purpose. The Assembly may wish to reiterate the call in its resolution 53/192 for recipient Governments concerned to be fully and effectively involved in such evaluations, and encourage the United Nations system to support those Member States that intend to undertake these evaluations themselves, as and when required. The Assembly may also wish to request the Secretary-General to report on the results of this impact evaluation activity at its fifty-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council, in the context of the triennial policy review.

VIII. Some issues of field-level coordination

A. Simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures

54. A major impediment to the coherent functioning of the United Nations development system has been the multiplicity of rules, procedures and modalities specific to each organization. Simplification and rationalization have long been on the reform agenda, with mixed results. The UNDAF process provided an impetus to United Nations funds and programmes to make further progress in this area. From the feedback from country teams and programme countries it emerges that, despite the progress made, a real and lasting breakthrough has yet to take place. The culture and working methods of system organizations are still governed by the different agency-specific rules and procedures. A stage is now reached where further significant progress is possible only with more intensive initiatives at the headquarters of the organizations. An assessment of the progress (or lack of progress) achieved was presented at the substantive session of 2000 of the Economic and Social Council,[8] which led to important conclusions on the need for further action, especially at headquarters level, by United Nations system organizations.

B. Resident coordinator system

55. Since its inception in 1977 (see General Assembly resolution 32/197), the functioning of the resident coordinator system has significantly evolved and its role has been strengthened. The concept of the resident coordinator system is now accepted by the entire United Nations system and by the programme

countries as the most important sign of the system's presence at the country level and as a key instrument for system-wide field-level coordination. The reform process of the United Nations, launched by the Secretary-General in 1997, aimed at, inter alia, further strengthening the functioning of the resident coordinator system in accordance with Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120. In resolution 53/192, the Assembly called for a greater use of the resident coordinator system in support of the Government's efforts in coordinating external assistance in the pursuit of national development goals.

56. Member States, at the 2001 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, confirmed the role of the resident coordinator system in system-wide coordination at the country level. They acknowledged that it could play a decisive role in enhancing the efficient and effective functioning of the United Nations system at the country level. Member States have welcomed the continued improvement in the functioning of the resident coordinator system. They recognized that, since 1997, the resident coordinator system had been significantly enhanced in terms of resident coordinator assessment, selection and appraisal mechanisms, communications between agency headquarters and field offices, and functioning of country teams.[9]

57. Nevertheless, there is further room to promote the participation in the resident coordinator system of the United Nations specialized agencies, inter alia, by establishing more effective mechanisms for a more direct and immediate dialogue and feedback between the resident coordinator and these agencies, especially the small technical agencies as well as regional commissions. It is also possible to introduce innovations that may enhance the capacity of the resident coordinator system to involve and interact with other partners like the Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral donors and the civil society. It is important to encourage, in the resident coordinator system, a sense of belonging to the United Nations system as a whole, thereby reinvigorating the commitment of all United Nations organizations to more substantive collaboration in areas such as thematic groups and joint programmes. There is also further room to intensify efforts to involve the broader donor community in the work of the resident coordinator system and facilitate closer complementarity in the country work of all external partners. Efforts must be undertaken to facilitate the dialogue of the resident coordinator system with the Government and civil society.

C. Common premises and shared services

58. Common premises, including the promotion of the concept of the United Nations House, and shared services are important contributions to the enhancement of the efficiency of programme delivery and improvement of the effectiveness of United Nations development support. Progress has been made in the past three years under the guidance of UNDG, as detailed in addendum 2. This process has to be sustained and intensified in close consultation with the concerned Governments.

D. Monitoring and evaluation

59. The current efforts to focus on results and benchmarks for the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (see General Assembly resolution 55/162) and the work under way for the preparation of a long-term "road map" provide the setting for defining the directions in which monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities of operational activities could evolve in the future. As illustrated in addendum 1, the Assembly, in the past three triennial policy reviews, identified four principles as regards the area of M&E: (a) the need to strengthen national capacity in M&E; (b) the importance of adopting the programme approach, as the preferred modality for development cooperation; (c) the need to encourage joint evaluations; and (d) the need to improve effectiveness and impact of operational activities for development.

60. Despite the efforts made to implement these principles, moving from project-level towards strategic and policy-oriented monitoring, the impact evaluations show that there is little institutional memory within the system on the impact of its operational activities and there is need to enhance its capacity to learn from past experiences. It is not clear whether there has been a clear shift in the focus of M&E practices away from technical concerns that still pivot on project management issues (ensuring technical accountability) and whether the system is moving towards more strategic concerns of country-level effectiveness and programme and organizational impact. Current M&E practices do not seem to indicate that the system and

recipient countries have achieved an appropriate degree of lesson learning, so that development efforts could take full account of the outcomes from past experiences.

Recommendation 11

The General Assembly may wish to take note of the progress achieved in the simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures of the United Nations development system. The Assembly may also wish to call for an intensification of efforts by all system organizations to introduce or continue, especially at headquarters level, the process of simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures. This process should address, in particular, decentralization, financial management and country programming procedures, and should aim at reducing, where appropriate, complexities and diversity of requirements. The objective should be to ensure that these reforms produce a recognizable impact at the country level by reducing the transaction costs of operational activities for development both to the recipient countries and to the United Nations system and promote their integration in national programmes.

The General Assembly may also wish to reiterate that any innovation in this area should promote the full participation of the Government and a broader dialogue with other players at the national level, and should be responsive to the needs and capacity of recipient countries.

The General Assembly might wish to urge the United Nations system organizations to ensure that progress towards harmonization in the programming procedures within the system should take full advantage of the potential for collaboration with other donors, including bilateral donors, with a view to achieving better integration of operational activities in national development efforts.

The General Assembly may also wish to request UNDG and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to address the requirements for further harmonization and simplification of procedures and to submit, through the Secretary-General, a yearly report to the Economic and Social Council on progress achieved in these areas.

Recommendation 12

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate support for continued strengthening of the resident coordinator system, with full participation of all system organizations (including those with no field-level representation and the regional commissions), as an important vehicle for the efficient and effective functioning of the United Nations system at the country level and as an instrument contributing to the coordination of system activities in close consultation with the national Government.

Recommendation 13

In taking note of the progress achieved in the area of common premises and shared services at the country level within the United Nations system, the General Assembly may wish to request the Executive Boards of the United Nations funds and programmes to consider initiatives to pursue further progress in these areas at the next joint sessions of their Executive Boards by developing a joint programme of action and to submit it to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2002.

Recommendation 14

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate the need to strengthen capacities of the recipient countries to perform effective programme, projects and financial monitoring as well as impact evaluations of operational activities funded by the United Nations. The Assembly may wish to request the United Nations funds and programmes and the secretariats of United Nations conventions to carry out an assessment of the extent to which system organizations learn lessons from their evaluation systems and to report to the Economic and Social Council thereon, through the Secretary-General, at its substantive session of 2002.

E. Involvement of specialized agencies

61. As an important reservoir of knowledge and expertise, the specialized agencies are integral and important parts of the United Nations development system. As the world moves towards a knowledge society, their roles will be even more important in the future in the normative and standard-setting areas and in harnessing their activities for assistance to developing countries in acquiring technical know-how and responding to technological changes for development. This is even more valid for smaller agencies that are technically focused. In order that they may play their potential roles, it is important to enhance the involvement of specialized agencies in the country-level dialogue between the United Nations system and the Government and other national partners. Many specialized agencies, especially the smaller ones, do not have direct field representation and national stakeholders in recipient countries may find it difficult to have access to their services and their potential contribution to development. Adequate resources for this purpose, including budgetary support to specialized agencies, are a crucial condition for achieving this objective. The decline or stagnation of funding for United Nations operational activities for development, particularly UNDP core funding, and the shift to national execution in the early 1990s, have had the unintended consequence of diminishing the participation of specialized agencies in United Nations development cooperation, which, in conjunction with the reduction in their own technical assistance funding, has affected the access and ability of developing countries to draw upon their technical and technological expertise to support national development efforts.

F. Cooperation with international financial institutions

62. In its resolution 53/192, the General Assembly called for greater cooperation with the World Bank, regional development banks and United Nations funds and programmes. Since then, considerable progress has been made in strengthening such cooperation. The adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and its implementation are expected to give further impetus to cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions at the country level. The challenges of globalization and the growing convergence between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions on common priorities and areas of concentration, such as poverty reduction, capacity-building, environment, HIV/AIDS and gender, especially in the context of achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration, opens the way for a more effective collaboration with all these institutions.

63. In the past few years, this convergence has led to better coordination at the country level and strengthened dialogue at the headquarters level. This cooperation could be further improved through greater information-sharing and better complementarity of efforts on the basis of the organizations' respective mandates, competences and advantages.

64. The dimensions of the challenges faced by recipient countries highlight their need to optimize the relevant mix of resources and skills that the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions can make available to them, through intensified collaboration, under the leadership of the Governments concerned. Processes such as CCA, UNDAF and PRSP have created opportunities for increased cooperation in some countries, which could be further enhanced.

65. The potential for greater collaboration between the United Nations development system and regional development banks should also be more fully explored and concretized, identifying further opportunities for joint involvement in operational activities for development. Considerable scope exists for such tripartite collaboration among the United Nations development system, Bretton Woods institutions and regional development banks, upon further consultations, which should involve the national Government.

Recommendation 15

In reiterating the content of paragraph 30 of its resolution 50/120 which highlights the role of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the smaller technical agencies and those with no field representation, as key instruments to respond to rapidly changing technical and technological conditions, as well as that of previous resolutions, the General Assembly may recognize the need to ensure that the services of these specialized agencies are

within easier reach of requesting Governments and may wish to encourage, for that purpose, collaboration of the United Nations funds and programmes with the specialized agencies in order to promote interaction in the design and delivery of development cooperation.

Recommendation 16

In reiterating paragraph 35 of resolution 53/192, the General Assembly may wish to encourage further strengthened and systematic cooperation between the United Nations funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions as well as with the regional development banks, calling for increased complementarity, increased use for technical cooperation of the knowledge and expertise available within the United Nations system, better division of labour and enhanced coherence in the respective activities for more effective support to recipient countries, especially when facing the challenges of globalization and international development, in order to assist recipient Governments in their national development efforts, in accordance with their priorities.

IX. Other dimensions of operational activities

A. Relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development cooperation

66. In recent years, the number of countries facing special situations has continued to grow and there has been a concomitant increase in attention to the interlinkages between conflict prevention, relief, rehabilitation and development and the need for a comprehensive approach, which relies upon combined relevant capabilities of the organizations of the system to support such countries for restoration of peace and longer-term development. The interrelationships among relief, development and peace operations need to be further clarified. The interaction of these dimensions in countries in special circumstances represents a major challenge for the United Nations system, which calls for new skills and forms of collaboration and response capacities. There is broad consensus that long-term sustainable development cannot be put on hold even at times of crisis or post-crisis and that it has to be pursued while shorter-term interventions are urgently required.

67. Several modalities are being used in the United Nations system to facilitate planning and coordination in these situations. CCA and UNDAF used flexibly in relation to the consolidated appeals process (CAP) and the strategic framework provide opportunities to assist countries in such situations in respect of developing and implementing a comprehensive national development strategy. The improvement of tools and collaborative arrangements applicable to countries in special development situations requires continuing attention.[10]

B. Gender in development

68. The General Assembly in its resolution 53/192 called for mainstreaming gender in the context of operational activities for development. To this end, the United Nations system has taken several steps since then through various instruments such as CCA and UNDAF, country-level thematic groups, and the work of the UNDG sub-group on gender and its working group on the resident coordinator system (see addendum 1 for details). Efforts have also been made in the areas of training on gender and capacity-building, as well as through the dissemination of best practices on gender. The gender perspective has been given particular attention in relation to poverty eradication. Networks of gender specialists have been established within and between some organizations, making better use of existing capacity in this area. Individual entities of the United Nations system have also initiated internal measures to bring about greater gender balance in their organization. Member States noted with satisfaction, at the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council, the general trend towards mainstreaming a gender perspective as an important component of operational activities and are encouraged that this perspective receives further and consistent consideration in country programmes and designs.

69. In the 2001 high-level debate of the Economic and Social Council, Member States called for further work in areas such as equitable access to financial and productive resources for women and other issues related to poverty and the condition of rural women.

Member States also encouraged the system to intensify its efforts to bring the gender perspective into new and emerging areas, such as HIV/AIDS, peace and security, ICT and financing for development. Actions in these areas require closer and innovative collaborations among system organizations and should be defined in consultation with the Governments concerned.

Recommendation 17

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate the provisions of paragraph 39 of its resolution 53/192, which recognized that relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development required a comprehensive approach and noted the need for an early application of development tools in humanitarian emergencies.

The General Assembly may also wish to give further consideration to the interconnections between peace and development, in line with the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and request that the United Nations system, in consultation with Member States concerned, give greater attention to measures of development cooperation that can help in the prevention of armed conflicts and in peace-building, and to measures that enhance the interaction and complementarity between humanitarian assistance and operational activities for development, and also request that the United Nations system strengthen appropriate tools for assistance in such situations.

Recommendation 18

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate the provisions of paragraph 47 of its resolution 53/192, which calls for gender mainstreaming in operational activities for development of the United Nations system in all fields, in particular in support of poverty eradication, and take note of the progress achieved in this area, also through the experience accumulated with CCA and UNDAF processes and theme groups on gender established at the country level. The Assembly may also wish to call for renewed efforts in gender mainstreaming in the frameworks of the system's operational activities, inter alia, through training and analysis of sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data, as well as adequate dissemination of good practices.

C. Regional dimensions

70. Although much of the development cooperation of the United Nations system is focused at the country level, the regional and subregional dimensions have special importance in the context of the many cross-border, regional and global issues and concerns. The General Assembly has urged greater integration of these dimensions in the operational activities of the system. As a result, regional commissions and regional and subregional offices of some agencies are becoming more involved in the preparation of CCA and UNDAF, as required in the guidelines of these instruments. It is expected that regional entities will contribute more actively to the work of the system at the country level in the future. Some agencies traditionally have strong regional and subregional field structures for service delivery, while others focus considerable effort on cross-border issues and their implications. At the same time, there is a growing interest with respect to strengthening the relations of the United Nations system with other regional, subregional and interregional organizations, including also regional development banks, for broader partnerships in dealing with the challenges of development.

71. Governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies still need to take more fully into account the regional and subregional dimensions of development cooperation, including suggestions from regional commissions that are relevant for the definition of country programmes. At the field level, the resident coordinator system needs to become more sensitive to regional and subregional aspects that are relevant to the national context. The incorporation of these dimensions into the operational activities of the United Nations system should be achieved in close consultation with Governments so as to ensure the consideration of national needs.

72. Since regional commissions, in most cases, do not have a country presence, their views and suggestions should be communicated to the governing bodies of the system organizations and to the resident coordinators through regular channels of communication and better use of information technology.

D. Technical and economic cooperation among developing countries

73. Technical cooperation among developing countries is a critical dimension of the United Nations development cooperation. It is an instrument of collective self-reliance and mutual reinforcement of developing countries. Integrating it into the operational activities for development can enhance their efficiency and impact and be beneficial to the developing countries. At the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council, Member States reiterated their appreciation for the contribution of the United Nations system to the technical and economic cooperation among developing countries. They also noted the efforts made in the formulation of new policy instruments to mainstream the modality of technical and economic cooperation among developing countries (TCDC/ECDC) into the context of operational activities, by revising the TCDC guidelines, establishing TCDC focal points, designing appropriate policy instruments, disseminating best practices and promoting indigenous knowledge, know-how and technology through South-South cooperation. Since UNDP remains the major provider of support to TCDC, some Member States at the Council welcomed the priority given to TCDC in the UNDP Administrator's Business Plans, 2002-2003, and called for enhanced contributions to the core resources of the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC.

Recommendation 19

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate the need to incorporate the regional and subregional dimensions in United Nations development cooperation and may wish to encourage the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, both at headquarters and at the country level, as well as the resident coordinators, in close consultation with Governments, to provide increasing support to regional initiatives and secure greater involvement of regional commissions in the formulation of strategic and coordination frameworks, as well as in the formulation of individual country programmes.

Recommendation 20

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate its call for a more concerted and coordinated effort to integrate and mainstream the modality of TCDC into the framework of United Nations development cooperation, in collaboration with the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC and all other relevant international institutions within the United Nations system as well as with the developing countries concerned, including identifying and evolving necessary mechanisms for that purpose.

Notes

[1] General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[2] Some developing countries have attached high priority to ICT and are looking for external assistance in this area, including from the United Nations system. Pursuant to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which inter alia, endorsed the Ministerial Declaration of the high-level segment of 2000 of the Economic and Social Council entitled "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy" (see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/55/3/Rev.1), chap. III, para. 17), an ICT Task Force is currently seeking to develop modalities to strengthen the capacities of developing countries in this domain.

[3] See report of the Secretary-General entitled "Progress in the implementation of the multi-year funding frameworks and evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework" (A/56/70-E/2001/58) of 14 May 2001.

[4] See report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950) of 14 July 1997, para. 161, Action 10.

[5] See, inter alia, the preambular paragraphs of General Assembly resolution 44/211, which was adopted pursuant to the 1989 comprehensive triennial policy review.

[6] See report of the Secretary-General entitled "Progress in the implementation of the multi-year funding frameworks and evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework" (A/56/70-E/2001/58).

[7] The mission reports for each country are also available online at http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/impa-intro.htm.

[8] See report of the Secretary-General entitled "Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: funding operational activities for development of the United Nations system, simplification and harmonization of programming, operational and administrative procedures and United Nations funds and programmes: oversight role of the Council" (E/2000/46), sect. III on simplification and harmonization of programming, operational and administrative procedures.

[9] Progress achieved is detailed in addendum 1.

[10] See the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/56/95-E/2001/85) of 18 June 2001, in particular sects. IV.A and IV.E. The importance of linking relief and development activities is reflected in General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and has been reiterated by the Economic and Social Council in its agreed conclusions 1998/1 (see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/53/3), chap. VII, para. 5) and agreed conclusions 1999/1 (ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/54/3/Rev.1), chap. VI, para. 5).

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Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system for development

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Analysis of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192

Summary

The present addendum complements the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system for development (A/56/320) and contains the assessment of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192. It is complemented by the reports of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the multi-year funding frameworks and the evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (A/56/70-E/2001/58), on comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for development for 1999 (A/56/70/Add.1-E/2001/58/Add.1) and the preliminary report on comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for the year 2000 (A/56/70/Add.2).

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I. Introduction

1. The present addendum contains the results of a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998. It contains an update of the assessment contained in the interim report (E/2001/66), which was considered by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001. To ensure accuracy and broad coverage of the assessment, reflecting the views of all the principal partners, this analysis is mainly based on replies to questionnaires received[1] from 25 programme countries, 13 donor Governments, 24 organizations of the United Nations system, 110 resident coordinators and 22 programme/project managers of field activities supported by the United Nations system. It also draws upon impact evaluation missions on capacity-building and poverty eradication in six countries and an external evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process. Finally, it takes into account the views expressed by Member States at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2001.

II. The changing context and challenges

2. The United Nations system continues to be viewed by many countries as a valued and indispensable partner and as a source of neutral and objective assistance and advice. The new context of development cooperation, which has greatly changed over the past decade, poses new challenges to the United Nations operational activities. In particular:

(a) Globalization, driven by the forces of economic and financial integration and by the pervasive impact of information and communication technologies, is fundamentally changing the context and dynamics of development, offering new opportunities, but also posing new risks and challenges, particularly for developing countries;

(b) Global economic integration is shrinking the world, but a global sense of solidarity and shared destiny that it should engender has yet to take hold between the rich and the poor. Economies are becoming increasingly interlinked, yet prosperity remains a privilege for the few;

(c) Robust global economic growth over recent years has been accompanied by a significant increase in income inequalities within and among rich and poor countries. The number of people living in poverty continues to grow despite the fact that the means to eradicate poverty in a short time frame are within easy grasp in the world at large;

(d) The fiscal health of most major industrial nations has improved, but overall official development assistance (ODA) and multilateral development cooperation have been either stagnant or in decline;

(e) The framework and content of the development agenda have been enlarged and deepened, yet uneven and inadequate economic growth in the poorest countries remains a major obstacle to the attainment of this broader agenda. The primacy of people and participatory development have been emphasized, but their implementation through aid policies and performance is only slowly making progress;

(f) It is increasingly recognized that global problems cannot be solved only at the global level and national problems cannot be addressed successfully solely at the local level. A global-national interdependence has emerged. While support for national development remains central, the emergence of global concerns and a global context and approach has expanded the ambit of development cooperation and made its mission more complex, daunting and, with shrinking resources, even more difficult to attain. Sustainable development, sustained growth and poverty eradication have emerged as the intertwined purposes of development cooperation. At the same time, with increasing emphasis being placed on results and effectiveness of development cooperation, there is a growing demand for the measurement and monitoring of these results on a global scale;

(g) Along with human rights, the right to development is now widely accepted and a right-based approach to development is broadly pursued. The United Nations system is now being encouraged[2] to provide support to national efforts to achieve the goals of good governance and democratization, once viewed as strictly a national endeavour;

(h) The concept of security is now seen to embrace economic and human dimensions. There has been a growing realization that sustainable development cannot be achieved without real peace, and vice versa. Human development is acknowledged to encompass economic growth, democratic governance and social equity;

(i) The way economic reform and structural adjustment is viewed has also evolved by articulating the concept of adjustment with a wider consideration of social dimensions;

(j) An expanding global agenda is coinciding — and sometimes colliding — with a growing but specific national agenda. While the United Nations development agenda has grown and widened, so have the needs and demands of developing countries in facing the new development challenges. They are diverse but specific, generic but specialized. The intersection of a broadening global agenda and diversified yet specific country demands compounds the complexity of United Nations development cooperation.

3. As a variety of channels and instruments for development cooperation is being used to a greater extent than in the past, the United Nations now has to operate in a more intensely competitive environment, with reduced real resources and with new partners, and must contribute to the achievement of time-bound targets.

Globalization

4. The United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2) recognized globalization as "the central challenge we face today". A major task, and opportunity, for development cooperation will be to ensure that the adverse effects of globalization are remedied and its benefits are more equitably distributed. Many Governments are engaged in formulating appropriate public policies, both economic and social, to cope with the dynamics of globalization in the specific national context. The operational activities of the United Nations system can help by disseminating the experiences of other countries and through its advisory and upstream work in supporting appropriate policies.

Liberalization

5. Economic liberalization in developing countries has affected their external economic cooperation, injecting new development needs. Trade liberalization in the context of meeting World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments is a major concern of the Governments of these countries. While most recognize the potential benefits of a liberalized trade regime, they want to open their economies according to the context and condition of their societies and to determine the pace and manner of doing so. Most developing countries feel that their economies do not have the flexibility and adaptability to meet all the requirements of the international trade regime. There is growing concern that too rapid and across-the-board liberalization might destabilize their still fragile economies and disrupt economic growth. Countries are requesting the help and advice of the United Nations system in such areas as policy and structural change and institutional infrastructure-building. The demand and need for trade-related technical assistance and advice for capacity-building has increased and must be met.

New partners

6. While Governments remain indispensable to the delivery and success of United Nations development cooperation, the role of Governments in economic management is changing. Accordingly, and in conformity with the evolving role of Governments and within their structure, the United Nations, consonant with its broader agenda, is interacting with a broader range of constituencies than before, including autonomous governmental entities. National execution has brought United Nations development work closer to line ministries, as well as non-governmental organizations, as executing or implementing agencies.

7. In many countries, attempts are being made towards political and economic decentralization, opening up new partnership opportunities to the United Nations system. Provincial and local authorities are aspiring to be direct partners with international organizations. New and innovative patterns of partnership, financial as well as managerial, are being forged between the United Nations, federal governments, local governments, NGOs and the people. The Organization is assisting countries in democratic decentralization. Nearly 95 per cent of resident coordinators have identified decentralized development and participatory development as one of the emerging areas of United Nations assistance.

8. The intended beneficiary of that assistance should also be an integral partner in development cooperation, not only in its implementation but even more in its design and formulation. To avoid the pitfalls of patronage and pilferage and as a way of empowerment, the active participation of civil society in United Nations development cooperation has become increasingly important. These non-State actors include the private sector, NGOs, community-based organizations and the scientific and technological communities. There are many examples of initiatives, such as the global compact and other efforts, that establish alliances with non-governmental partners. As the reach and scope of United Nations partnership expands, the challenge, rigour, transparency and accountability standards should not be compromised.

Millennium Summit

9. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, together with global conferences, has defined a new context, setting new milestones and time-bound targets, such as the targets of reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty by half by the year 2015 and achieving universal primary education by the same date. The greatest challenge is to translate these goals into action.

10. While the primary responsibility for the follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration lies with Member States and the international community, it constitutes the principal mandate and challenge to the United Nations development system to assist Member Governments and add value to national efforts for the realization of these goals. The General Assembly has called upon the organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen and adapt their strategies and activities to take into account the follow-up to the Declaration and requested the Secretary-General to ensure system-wide coordination of its implementation. This imparts a greater sense of immediacy and import to the goals of major United Nations conferences and places a greater responsibility on the United Nations development system to play its part in fulfilling its potential as a key instrument for international development cooperation, ensuring that its support to recipient countries is integrated in national processes.

III. Resources and funding

11. The three essentials for effective development cooperation are sufficient, secure and stable financing; a dynamic institutional structure; and appropriate means of design and delivery. The reform process initiated in recent years by Governments and the Secretary-General touches on all three, with varying degrees of effectiveness.

12. Assured and adequate availability of financial resources is a prerequisite to meeting current and further challenges facing the United Nations system. A weak, unstable and uncertain financial base hampers the capacity of the system's development cooperation to meet these challenges. The financing of operational activities has long been on the intergovernmental agenda and has been a major preoccupation in the previous triennial reviews. An implied impetus behind the reform of United Nations development cooperation was that it would lead to more stable and substantial flows of funding by enhanced development resources. But the trends thus far have not been encouraging.

13. ODA itself is declining, reaching an all-time low of 0.22 per cent of gross national product (GNP) in 1997. It rose slightly to 0.24 per cent in 1999. International aid flows declined through the 1990s, before stabilizing slightly in the last two years of the decade. Per capita aid to Africa, for example, has tumbled from US$ 43 to $30 since the early 1980s, slicing by half in real terms. Wide disparities within traditional donors are becoming an impediment to aid. While some donors have exceeded the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP, others are lagging far behind, one at barely 0.1 per cent.

14. The share of multilateral organizations has thus far, in broad terms, kept pace with the overall reduction in ODA, usually at about 30 per cent of total ODA. Not only is aid in real terms declining or stagnating, but its impact and effectiveness are

also under closer scrutiny than before. One postulate is that aid is effective only in the context and in conjunction with good governance and high-quality economic management. Others fear that these constraints could lead to selectivity and open the way towards subjective and extraneous considerations. Generally, however, there is far greater awareness than before that aid effectiveness and impact cannot be separated from aid availability. Despite increasing evidence that development funding is a good investment, politically as well as economically, the constituency for multilateral aid in major industrial societies does not appear to be strong or vocal enough to help reverse the decline.

15. Funding for operational activities, particularly regular or core activities, remains far short of the critical mass necessary for achieving efficiency and effectiveness of programme delivery. The operations of funds and programmes in many countries are at levels far below those approved by their executive boards. Core funds and regular resources are indispensable for carrying out the approved development programme. The growing asymmetry between resources that are reliable and stable and those that are transient and exigent is not only distorting the programme priorities of United Nations development cooperation but also making efficient management of the programmes much more difficult. Lack of resources affects impact, leading to further cutbacks and eroding public and political support. This vicious cycle has to be broken by increasing core funding.

16. There is also a growing trend towards support to short-term emergency types of activities, to the detriment of long-term development. Contributions to the World Food Programme (WFP) illustrate this problem. Some two thirds of its resources are devoted to humanitarian assistance and only one third to longer-term development, reversing the proportion of some years ago. Some donors have informed WFP that they may have to further reduce their contributions to its development activities. While bridges are being built between short-term and long-term dimensions of development cooperation, donor preferences and accountability are important. They determine the disposition of such funding.

17. Aid channelled through the United Nations development system is still overwhelmingly dependent on a few developed countries. Efforts to broaden the donor base of United Nations voluntary funding to arrive at a more equitable burden-sharing of funding have not yet yielded significant results.

18. Over the past few years, the pattern of voluntary contributions has been the subject of considerable scrutiny. The voluntary character of funding has been based on a simple article of faith and premise: that development aid has a moral underpinning; that it will always have a strong enlightened political constituency; and that the flexibility of choosing how much to contribute will be linked to performance and lead to more, not less aid.

19. The progress towards achieving multi-year frameworks for funding operational activities had raised expectations of reversing the declining trend in core resources, which has yet to be realized. While more time is needed for an informed assessment, the mode and the momentum of multi-year contributions have to be sustained and strengthened to achieve the desired goal of a substantial increase in and sustained predictability of funding. This will be a major step forward as a strategic planning device, but its financial dividend remains uncertain (see A/56/70-E/2001/58).

20. What are in question are the United Nations country-level presence and programming and the ability to respond to individual country needs. As a consequence, not only its development work but also its advocacy profile in the field, relating to disadvantaged sectors, such as children and women, and life-saving activities such as vaccinations, support to local initiatives in child and maternal health, primary and pre-school education, clean water and sanitation, are in danger of a serious decline. Critical programmes and activities are drastically scaled down or put on indefinite hold in many countries in Africa and in other least developed countries. The trust and confidence of Governments and civil society in the ability of the United Nations to sustain its development programming are also at risk.

21. The fundamental policy — and political — question is this: is the combination of the growing role of other institutions and channels in development cooperation and diminishing United Nations funding an uncoordinated, if not unintended, coincidence inherent in the way Governments operate, or is it a conscious collective political choice of donor countries? In the words of the Secretary-General, must the United Nations confine itself to encouraging and coordinating studies on the theory of development?[3] Should the United Nations development role be confined to global consciousness-raising and advocacy and normative and standard-setting? Would such a role even be sustainable without the capital of confidence and trust that the United Nations has been able to build up over the decades, as a neutral and reliable source of assistance and advice to so many countries in their various stages of development?

22. Greater clarity and commitment are essential not only to place United Nations development cooperation on a sounder and more stable footing, but also for the efficient pursuit of the global development agenda. These questions have to be addressed at a high political level to overcome the perceptions and pitfalls that have prevented progress. One such forum is the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, which will discuss the complex issues germane to financing development. A substantive policy discussion in the setting of the present review could provide a basis and points of reference for the Conference.

IV. Intergovernmental oversight of operational activities

23. Pivotal to the reform and renaissance of United Nations development cooperation is the strengthening of intergovernmental oversight, particularly of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. United Nations development cooperation is financed by Member States and is meant to add value and contribute to development in Member States. Governments determine policy through the General Assembly, provide coordinated oversight through the Economic and Social Council and manage the funds and programmes through executive boards. The interrelationship between these three intergovernmental bodies was defined by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/162 of 23 December 1994, which provided the legislative framework within which they discharge their respective responsibilities.

24. Over the past few years, this three-tier intergovernmental structure of oversight of United Nations operational activities has evolved in such a way that the General Assembly has performed its policy functions in the context of the triennial comprehensive policy review. The executive boards provide intergovernmental

support to and supervision of the activities of the funds and programmes. Among other things, their functions include implementing the policies of the Assembly and the coordinated guidance of the Council and recommending new initiatives to the Council and through the Council to the Assembly, as necessary. Executive heads and boards are taking important decisions to optimize scarce resources to streamline and shift their programme coverage and on the focus and the nature of country interventions.

25. From the start, the role of the Council has been less clearly defined and carried out. More recently, however, the Council has provided clearer guidance by taking decisions on important cross-cutting issues, such as gender, capacity-building and poverty eradication. The Council also brings into play, under its aegis, policy makers from Governments, the executive heads, country teams and the agencies of the United Nations system with a view to enhancing the overall coordination and impact of operational activities of the system.

Annual reports to the Council of the heads of the United Nations funds and programmes

26. In paragraphs 1 and 2 of its resolution 1998/27 of 28 July 1998, the Economic and Social Council called on the executive boards to ensure that the heads of United Nations funds and programmes include in their annual reports to the Council a thorough analysis of problems encountered and lessons learned. This should enable the Council, when considering the annual reports, to identify specific problems, opportunities and issues/areas where it could provide system-wide cross-sectoral coordination and overall guidance, making appropriate proposals, in order to perform its coordinating function.

27. Detailed information on the results of the consideration of the annual reports of the executive heads of the United Nations funds and programmes can be found in the relevant reports of the executive boards.

Concise consolidated list of issues

28. In its resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, the General Assembly indicated that the guidance functions of the Council should be reinforced by giving attention to the objectives, priorities and strategies in the implementation of the policies formulated by the General Assembly, as well as concentrating on cross-cutting and coordination issues. In its resolution 1998/27 of 1998, the Council invited the Secretary-General to arrange for submission to the Council by the executive heads of the United Nations funds and programmes, in consultation with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), of a concise consolidated list of issues which are central to the improved coordination of operational activities and on which the funds and programmes seek consideration by and guidance from the Council.

Joint and concurrent meetings of the executive boards

29. The Council, in paragraph 29 of its resolution 1999/6 of 23 July 1999, recommended that the practice of holding joint meetings of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council and the bureaux of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food

Programme should be continued, and requested the respective bureaux to report on the meetings to their governing bodies.

30. The 2001 session of the Joint Executive Board of UNDP, UNICEF, WFP and UNFPA had as its main topic the progress made with the use of common country assessment indicator frameworks and featured a presentation by the United Nations country team and the Vice-Chairman of the national planning commission from Nepal, focusing on the common country assessment and UNDAF experience in that country.

31. At the session, it was agreed that it was necessary for the common country assessment indicator frameworks to evolve to respond to new priorities spelled out in national plans, conference reviews and the United Nations Millennium Declaration and that continued international financial assistance and technical expertise were required. Developing new indicators would require building on best practices from previous experience, and should take advantage of greater country and regional participation.

V. Strategic frameworks and programming

32. The General Assembly has repeatedly called for greater coherence in development operations of the United Nations system. To this end, the main instruments are UNDAF and the common country assessment (CCA). The strategic framework and the consolidated appeal process are used for special situations. Other instruments, established by the Bretton Woods institutions, are the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

33. In response to a request by the General Assembly, an evaluation of UNDAF has been conducted (A/56/70-E/2001/58). Major findings are summarized here, looking at UNDAF as a means of promoting coherent programming, producing benefits to recipient countries and contributing to the coherence and effectiveness of the system's operations. This has also required assessing the common country assessment and linkages with the comprehensive development framework, PRSPs and sector-wide approaches.

34. UNDAF has been completed in 38 countries, is in progress in 31 others and is planned for 25 additional countries.[4] The introduction of the common country assessment has rapidly progressed over the past two years, as a necessary precondition to UNDAF. The common country assessment has been completed in 84 countries, is under preparation in 32 other countries and is planned in a further 8 countries.

Impact on recipient countries

35. The evaluation findings show that UNDAF provides recipient countries with a greater understanding of the system's role in development, providing a review of the system's approach to cooperation and identifying priority areas for action. As confirmed by government representatives of a few recipient countries where the process was launched, it can generate opportunities to address sensitive issues (human rights, internally displaced persons and alternative development strategies) when there is a forthright dialogue with national interlocutors. It can enhance the

integration of system programmes with national strategies when they are based on national priorities. In some countries where the Government was fully involved from the outset, the common country assessment and UNDAF have enhanced coordination among national stakeholders.

36. The common country assessment often provides a background reference to government, system organizations and other stakeholders and can be a powerful tool for policy dialogue, enhancing country-level monitoring of international goals and contributing to information-sharing. It opens the way to capacity-building in the areas of statistics and data analysis by identifying data gaps and constraints that require support for national statistical systems.[5] The common country assessment and UNDAF may play an important role in assisting developing countries in the follow-up and implementation of major United Nations conferences.

37. The evaluation shows that there is not enough factual evidence that UNDAF provides an input to national policy formulation through better development planning and policy design or through promoting more effective national coordination either of national development policies or of external assistance, nor is it always synchronized with national planning.

38. A thorough national participation from the outset in all phases of the common country assessment and UNDAF has been considered essential to ensure a positive impact on recipient countries, but so far results have been mixed. Sometimes the Government is fully engaged, but in other cases participation is limited to a formal consent or to comments on finished products. This is the case even to a greater extent for civil society organizations. When national involvement is limited, the capacity-building impact of the common country assessment is hardly evident. It is necessary to move forward in making use of these instruments, broadening their consistency both at the national level, within the host country, and with the donor community.

39. A major concern is the increase in "transaction costs" for both the countries and the system organizations that are associated with the preparation and monitoring of the common country assessment and UNDAF. The evaluation shows that both processes require the commitment of considerable resources, increased workload and skills, which represent additional costs that can only be justified if they enhance the effectiveness of United Nations development support, while reducing redundancy and duplication of work.

Impact on the United Nations system

40. The evaluation shows that UNDAF has produced substantial results in identifying common strategic priorities and established a framework for country programmes. The common country assessment and UNDAF have contributed to the development of a "system culture" as an important team-building mechanism, reinforcing the collective identity of the country teams through information-sharing and joint partnerships in designing a cooperation strategy. Decentralization and delegation of authority by most organizations have facilitated these effects. More intensive teamwork is seen in strategic programming around cross-cutting and cross-sectoral issues and system-wide concurrence, with respect to conference follow-up. The common country assessments have proved to be helpful in preparing UNDAFs and identifying common strategic directions. Some country representatives recognize that their respective agency headquarters or regional substructures are not

fully supportive of UNDAF, although the common country assessment and UNDAF have induced an increased participation of specialized agencies in coordinated analysis and strategic planning.

41. The common country assessment (especially the indicator framework) and UNDAF provide some support to the coordinated country-level conference follow-up, focusing on cross-cutting issues and challenges that the conference will have identified. The establishment of an indicator database for national priorities and conference follow-up is a major result of the common country assessment.

42. System participation in both common country assessment and UNDAF processes has reached significant levels but is uneven. There are concerns regarding the limited involvement of United Nations entities or agencies, including regional commissions, that are not directly represented in the country. The involvement of the Bretton Woods institutions in the common country assessment and UNDAF, which is very effective in some cases, is not uniform in all countries. The new information technologies offer new opportunities to improve system efficiency and connectivity, enhancing cooperation in all directions between headquarters and field level.

43. A quality evaluation of the common country assessment and UNDAF does not lead to uniform conclusions. Technical quality is improving, but is uneven. Documents are often vague, lack specificity and do not specify targets, expected results and time lines for selected priority areas, or lack built-in monitoring. Some documents lack focus, are not founded on an adequate database, omit key development factors and do not cover all relevant sectors. The knowledge required to produce good common country assessments and UNDAFs may call for an improvement of the skill profile of the country teams and a greater use of the United Nations system's variety of expertise and perspectives that reflect different mandates of different organizations, in order to be able to respond more effectively to the diversified needs of programme countries under a common policy framework.

Common country assessment/UNDAF and country programming

44. Since the UNDAF process has only been in effect over the past four years and, in a number of countries, has only recently been completed, evidence of its impact on individual country programmes is still modest. Its influence on agency programming has so far produced mixed results. Small technical agencies do not recognize such an influence, but most system organizations (in particular, United Nations funds and programmes and large specialized agencies) are taking measures to incorporate UNDAF into their agency country programming.

45. UNDAF has created favourable conditions for joint programming, without altering the institutional separation among country programmes. Efforts have been multiplied to promote joint initiatives, programmes, mid-term reviews, evaluation efforts and services.

46. The common country assessment and UNDAF were expected to lower transactional costs through a "replacement effect", reducing procedural requirements for individual country programming. Some progress has been attained by funds and programmes, but preparations for country programmes still have separate requirements. Individual organizations and UNDG confirm that this area requires the highest priority. Currently, UNDG is promoting initiatives to streamline the

programme approval processes (A/56/70-E/2001/58, paras. 67 and 117). Nevertheless, there is no systematic evidence that the expected replacement is taking place at the system-wide level in all organizations.

Resources and technical support for CCA and UNDAF

47. Considerable technical support and resources were provided, in particular, through UNDG, to facilitate the introduction of UNDAF and the extended implementation of the common country assessment, including training initiatives. The external evaluation suggests that funding of the common country assessment and UNDAF should be further augmented and that the principle of cost-sharing should involve all participating organizations. There is no uniform position in the system with regard to the need for additional support to the common country assessment and UNDAF, since the resource constraint seems to be felt mostly by organizations that have difficulty in ensuring participation in the two processes.

48. There is some evidence of an uneven level of technical capacity in the country teams to support the common country assessment and UNDAF which would call for an improvement of the technical profile of the country teams. New skills not available within the country team may still be available within the system. The combined presence and support of all funds, programmes and specialized agencies suggest that the system has sufficient competence to address the requirements for an overall vision of development priorities and their various sector-wide dimensions. The problem is then how to ensure the provision of that expertise when it is not available within the country team. Again, the wider use of new information technologies may be useful.

Relations with other frameworks

49. The relations of UNDAF and the common country assessment with other frameworks require some attention either for their possible complementarity or for the risk of duplication. There is evidence of reciprocal participation of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, on the one hand, and the Bretton Woods institutions, on the other, in UNDAF and the common country assessment, as well as the Comprehensive Development Framework, PRSPs and sector-wide approaches. There is a need for rationalizing these processes and ensuring better sequencing. Work is in progress to facilitate the integration of UNDAF and the common country assessment with the Comprehensive Development Framework and PRSPs through a joint learning group.

50. The Comprehensive Development Framework principles are compatible with the concepts and guiding principles adopted for UNDAF and the common country assessment. However, their coverage may be different. CDF is more of an approach and a process, rather than a strategy for analysis and implementation. The common country assessment is an analytical tool, which could feed into the Comprehensive Development Framework where it exists, while UNDAF is the "business plan" of the United Nations system.

51. More attention has recently been given to the involvement of the system in the PRSP process. Since the United Nations system is already operating in several countries with initiatives that aim at poverty reduction, its interaction with PRSPs is of special relevance. There are concrete examples of close collaboration of the United Nations system in the PRSP process. Since the PRSP process has been

introduced only recently, its relations with UNDAF and the common country assessment are still at an initial stage.

52. UNDAF provides the basis for articulating a more coherent and unified United Nations system response to sector investment programmes and sector-wide approaches adopted by Governments. Sector-wide approaches are a vehicle for a broader application of the programme approach. The potential contribution of the common country assessment as an input to the preparation of sector-wide approaches has been underlined. Some reflection is required on the implications of the common country assessment and UNDAF for sector-specific work. The challenge of sector-wide approaches is how to address cross-cutting issues. The common country assessment and UNDAF provide a framework to establish these cross-sectoral linkages.

53. Both the common country assessment and UNDAF have focused on processes to reach synergy in the programming of system activities at the country level. In order to increase the effectiveness and relevance of these processes, more attention should be given in the future to possible ways to integrate system activities in the national programmes according to the principles of the programme approach. UNDAF provides the basis for achieving this integration, provided that its constituency and coverage are solidly established in a thorough dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, both national and international. As the General Assembly has repeatedly called for in its resolutions, this integration of United Nations system programmes into the national planning processes remains the final objective towards which all these strategic frameworks should aim.

VI. Impact evaluation of operational activities: capacity-building and poverty eradication

54. Impact evaluations were carried out in response to paragraph 53 of General Assembly resolution 53/192. They followed a pilot series of evaluations which were an input to the 1998 triennial comprehensive policy review. They analysed the overall performance of the United Nations development system and were designed to provide inputs to guidance for the operational activities of the United Nations system. This second series focused on capacity-building and poverty eradication in six countries.

55. For the purposes of the exercise, capacity-building was understood to involve building up the capabilities, knowledge and security of individuals, strengthening or creating organizations and creating or modifying the environment within which the organizations would operate. Poverty eradication was considered as a process of eliciting positive changes in the capabilities of individuals in terms of access to knowledge, services and assets, and incomes. Both capacity-building and poverty eradication are closely linked to the general thrust of the country's development policies. It is therefore not surprising that much of United Nations system support to capacity-building was found to be related to poverty eradication. The detailed information on the results of impact evaluations, including reports of all missions, will be provided to the General Assembly within the framework of the review.

56. Some broad conclusions from these impact evaluation are summarized in the main report on the triennial comprehensive policy review (A/56/320). First, with the

right policy mix and institutional capacity and with adequate international assistance, poverty can be significantly and rapidly reduced and the United Nations system can play an important role in that process. United Nations system support to capacity-building has been an important part of that role. Secondly, there is a shortage of resources, both national and external, available for poverty reduction. The gains to be made nationally, regionally and globally from an increase of resources devoted to genuine poverty reduction should therefore be considerable. Thirdly, there is a close relationship between capacity-building and national ownership, both at the conceptual and the implementation stages. In this regard, appropriate involvement of national organizations, local beneficiaries and Governments is highly desirable.

57. One essential message is that, given the right environment, the United Nations system can assist recipient countries in successfully addressing key problems which have emerged at the core of global concerns, such as poverty eradication.

58. Thus, for example, in one case study a country has been clearly successful in reducing poverty and the United Nations system has made a significant contribution to that reduction. The key factors in that outcome have been the following: the Government exercised strong political leadership and the interaction with the United Nations system throughout the period worked well. The United Nations system was involved in a central transformation of the society. It had an input both to the policy and to the implementation process. The United Nations country team contained or mobilized appropriate skills and also benefited from strong leadership during a key period early on. This was capacity-building in the best and broadest sense.

59. In other cases, there are also clear instances of impact and achievements in creating or strengthening capacity that have been furthered through the operational activities of the United Nations system. However, they were less certain, less comprehensive and more vulnerable to events and a lack of resources. These limits to success appear to be attributable to a combination of internal constraints and external factors. Nevertheless, all evaluations note the decline in resources and the restriction it places on effectiveness. There has to be a minimum of resources available within the society, though not necessarily provided via the United Nations system, for poverty eradication and capacity-building to succeed.

60. The United Nations system has helped to broaden the concept of capacity-building from human resource development to cover institution-building and organizational development. Recent General Assembly legislation prompted the issuance of system-wide guidelines on capacity-building. However, evaluations suggest that capacity-building is still seen as being the reserve of the United Nations Development Programme. The principle that capacity-building is central to operational activities has yet to be fully operationalized by the system.

61. Likewise, the understanding of the concept of poverty eradication has also evolved. The International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF and UNDP have all contributed to this evolution from a simple concept of income poverty to one that includes access to resources and services, particularly social services, capabilities, rights and inclusion. The poverty goals adopted by the Millennium Summit reflect this evolution. This approach is more operational and helps the international community and recipient countries address the issue in a more practical and comprehensive way, one that responds to the needs of countries, communities and individuals.

62. However, the evaluation studies found that the central concept of poverty eradication and the work of the individual entities of the United Nations development system could be more systematically linked. There is still some way to go in harmonizing particular sectoral preoccupations and the central concern of Member States for the reduction and eradication of poverty. It is not clear whether there is a consensus within the United Nations development system on how to eradicate poverty in the country concerned. Nor is it always clear that all the relevant disciplines are being brought to bear in this effort.

63. On a number of other issues, the evaluation studies have highlighted some gaps between concepts and practice or show that progress towards defined goals has been slow. Despite the emphasis on country ownership, in many cases operational activities are still seen as externally driven and ownership is closely related to impact in capacity-building. Programmes and projects should be prepared with greater attention to ways in which their content would contribute to an overall national strategy. Benchmarks and indicators of progress and achievement are often neglected, and the output of entire monitoring and evaluation systems does not yet include feedback to concept, solution and operations.

64. The inadequate institutional memory about past United Nations efforts and the consequent inability to learn lessons from experience remain a problem: current monitoring and evaluation practices may assure adequate accountability but do not assure an appropriate degree of lesson learning. The studies have also raised the question of whether, given the importance of poverty eradication, the United Nations system has the appropriate quality and mix of capacities available at the field level to address the broad range of issues with the required skills and expertise.

65. The studies found that advances have been made in the development of design, monitoring and evaluation tools. Some of these tools are well adapted to projects that have clear, narrowly defined objectives and clear, foreseeable implementation paths. However, these tools are less helpful where the precise course to be followed in implementation is not clearly known at the outset and where the objectives are necessarily imprecise and evolving, as is often the case with capacity-building. Creation and development of institutions are continuous processes and do not normally have a discreet time frame with a clearly defined beginning and end. If an organization is being created or strengthened, it is not always practical or cost-effective to determine at what instant it becomes self-sufficient. Furthermore, any such organization is part of the socio-economic system, which is also evolving and will continue to do so with or without the intervention. The purpose of the intervention is to change the nature and performance of one or more or all components of the system. As such, it is the performance of the system over time that should be the focus of the monitoring and evaluation. The United Nations Millennium Declaration provides important benchmarks for systemic monitoring and evaluation. However, work remains to be done, for example, in translating the goals of the Declaration into targets to be used at the agency, country or regional level. For instance, there is a matrix of indicators to be used by United Nations country teams in preparing their common country assessments. This provides helpful quantifiable targets. However, one lesson of these evaluations is that much that is necessary is not readily quantified, even if it can be observed and recorded by skilled, qualified observers. The challenge in evaluating the overall impact of operational activities is to use a judicious mix of quantitative and qualitative assessment to obtain a better understanding of the progress achieved.

VII. Field-level coordination

A. Simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures

66. Experience and a number of analyses conducted in recent years indicate that, notwithstanding progress made in harmonizing programme cycles and programming procedures, the diversity of rules, procedures, policies and formats that have been in effect over the broad scope of programme development and of operations of the United Nations system continue to place large burdens on recipient countries and complicate the coordination and management capacities of the United Nations system. The Secretary-General, in a previous report addressing the simplification and harmonization of programming, operational and administrative procedures that was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/192, gave a thorough review and assessment of the institutional provisions at the field level and of efforts made by the United Nations system in this area, particularly regarding programme cycles, processes, decentralization of authority and reorientation of executing modalities (see E/2000/46, sect. III).

67. While the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have frequently expressed the need for substantial reforms in the design, coordination and delivery of United Nations development support and urged appropriate actions to that end, it continues to be very difficult, as was revealed in the above-mentioned report, to achieve progress in harmonizing rules and procedures within the United Nations development system.

68. In this regard, the following are only two examples of a number of factors that are seen as hindering the effective development and conduct of programming and of operational activities: (a) diversity of programming procedures is a consequence of the diversity of mandates and of the institutional autonomy of the governing bodies of each organization; and (b) rules and procedures constitute the "nervous system" of each organization, and there is no compelling administrative force within an organization to introduce changes for the purpose of maintaining consistency with other parts of the system.

69. Nevertheless, even in the light of the acknowledged complexity of these and other factors, the General Assembly decided that changes in operational modalities were required to obtain effective impact and to maintain the necessary growth of development activities and of support provided by the United Nations system.

70. Along these lines, the General Assembly called for, among other things, the promotion and creation of common guidelines on procedures, especially as they related to programme components and project formulation, approval, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and administration. The changes that organizations did manage to introduce were usually of small consequence and slow to take effect, which largely explains the General Assembly's repeated urging of the funds and programmes to adopt measures and establish timetables for the advancement of the simplification and harmonization of procedures (E/2000/46, paras. 124 and 125).

71. Relatively good results have been achieved in the harmonization of programming cycles of the United Nations funds and programmes, which are considered essential prerequisites for the UNDAF process. As of March 2001, of a total of 94 countries in which harmonization is feasible, the number of countries

with harmonized programming cycles had reached 85. There were 18 countries where harmonization was not considered feasible and 47 where harmonization was not appropriate due to limited United Nations presence or programme activities. If this trend holds, it is estimated that by the end of 2004, 99 per cent of qualifying programme countries will have harmonized their cycles.

72. The boards of the funds and programmes placed emphasis on the country-driven nature of programme development, with the Governments and representatives of the United Nations funds and programmes, as well as United Nations agencies, firmly in control of the process. Various options for harmonizing programme development are under consideration, including procedures for defining responsibilities and for preparing country programmes and submission processes. In the programming area, efforts are under way to develop common formats for project design, which are expected to increasingly facilitate the promotion of joint or harmonized development initiatives, especially in the context of the common country assessment and UNDAF.

Table 1
Status of harmonization of programming cycles, as of March 2001

Category	*Description*	*Number of countries*	*Percentage*
A.	Countries with programme cycles harmonized	85	93
B.	Countries where the harmonization of programme cycles is still awaiting final alignment	5	6
C.	Countries where plans for harmonization have not been finalized	1	1
	Subtotal of countries where harmonization is feasible	**91**	**100**
D.	Countries where conditions remain uncertain/unstable and harmonization is not feasible	18	-
E.	Countries where harmonization is not appropriate due to limited United Nations presence or programme activities	47	-
	Total	**156**	-

73. With respect to programme approval processes, the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA met in June 2000 and adopted a series of key principles to facilitate programmatic complementarities, particularly the programme approval processes. These principles are: (a) to simplify the current processes in order to reduce the burden imposed on programme countries and United Nations country teams; (b) to encourage synergies between programmes of UNDG partner agencies; (c) to promote decentralization; (d) to ensure accountability of the executive boards through early inputs; and (e) to ensure the centrality of the common country assessment/UNDAF as a basis for programme development.

74. Moreover, an exclusive focus on the United Nations system regarding harmonization would be inadequate if it were not viewed as part of a need to address every effort to harmonize procedures with parallel activities of other external

development partners, multilateral agencies, bilateral donors and international NGOs.

75. Some inter-agency efforts have been made in the area of harmonization, mostly in the development of agreements on common guidelines. Inter-agency mechanisms, such as the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ)[6] and UNDG, have been active vehicles of these initiatives.[7] Some progress has been made in the area of decentralization and delegation of authority, although it is uneven between funds and programmes and specialized agencies, continuing to impact poorly on decision-making processes at the country level.

76. Specialized agencies of the United Nations system have undertaken considerable reorganization, including the decentralization of responsibilities at the country level. Nevertheless, more progress is required in the harmonization of procedures, particularly in the context of the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).

77. It should be noted, however, that during 2000, UNDG and CCPOQ accelerated their efforts to promote the harmonization of programming cycles and procedures, particularly joint programmes, joint mid-term reviews and harmonized administrative procedures for national project personnel. These efforts need to be pursued further.

78. In September 2000, the CCPOQ working group on the United Nations resident coordinator system agreed with the draft guidance note on joint programming and decided to extend discussion on the subject to the entire United Nations system and designated the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as task manager to lead this process. The working group agreed that the guidance note, with a menu of options, along with other needed revisions to allow for the participation by a larger group of United Nations organizations, would merit United Nations system-wide endorsement. UNESCO organized an informal meeting in November 2000 for this purpose, and one of its main decisions was to launch a pilot exercise on joint programming for field-testing of the draft guidance note in seven countries.[8]

79. Procedures for joint mid-term reviews of country programmes and UNDAFs have been established and are currently being field-tested in two countries[9] by their respective country teams with the objective of making them available for general use in 2001. Once programming cycles have been harmonized, the joint mid-term reviews of individual country programmes and UNDAFs will be much easier to complete and demands on the host Governments that have been participating in the review of country programmes of the individual funds and programmes are expected to be significantly lessened.

80. Of special importance is the concern about obtaining equitable treatment of employees of different agencies that work in the same country and are often performing similar functions. A guidance note on administrative procedures for national project personnel was prepared earlier in 2001 within the framework of UNDG to address mainly the questions of remuneration and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates for national project personnel. The note envisions consultations between interested agencies on salary scales that could be used by all United Nations agencies and discusses the conduct of surveys of labour markets as

well as of national staff of a country as bases for the establishment of salary scales for national project personnel.[10] In addition, a common definition of national project personnel was arrived at. Nine countries[11] were identified for field-testing based on information contained in the annual reports of the resident coordinators. In those countries, the United Nations system has taken initiatives to harmonize and coordinate administrative policies and procedures for application to locally recruited national personnel.[12]

81. The guidance note on administrative procedures for national project personnel is a step in the right direction, but it also reveals the extent of differences in operational modalities and approaches between agencies, and much work needs to be done to further harmonize the various procedures and practices of the United Nations organizations in this area.

The view from the field

82. A review and assessment of the replies of resident coordinators to the questionnaire indicates that in over two thirds of the reports received, the simplification and harmonization of monitoring and reporting requirements was deemed essential (just under one third of the resident coordinators considered it desirable but not essential). With respect to financial regulations, 80 per cent of the resident coordinators believe that simplification and harmonization is essential for effective programming and implementation of United Nations system activities.

83. Closely relevant is the matter of decentralization and delegation of authority by all United Nations organizations. Three fourths of the resident coordinators consider it essential for the effective conduct of their functions and responsibilities (one fourth of the resident coordinators deem it desirable but not essential).

Table 2
Importance of improvements in the opinion of the resident coordinator system
(Percentage)

Function	*Essential*	*Desirable but not essential*	*Minimal importance*
Simplify and harmonize monitoring and reporting requirements	72.6	27.4	-
Simplify and harmonize financial regulations	77.9	21.2	1.0
Introduce equal levels of decentralization and delegation of authority by all United Nations system organizations	73.1	26.0	1.0
Synchronize the mid-term reviews	37.5	54.8	7.7
Promote joint evaluation of projects and joint mid-term reviews	47.2	49.1	3.8

84. Synchronization of mid-term reviews was considered essential by less than 40 per cent of the resident coordinators. Nearly 55 per cent considered it desirable but not essential.

85. Views about the promotion of joint evaluation of projects and joint mid-term reviews were about equally divided between those considering it essential and those considering it desirable but not essential.

86. Although measurable harmonization has been achieved, much remains to be done to ease the burden on country offices and national counterparts. Delays in the CCA/UNDAF roll-out have constituted missed opportunities for developing more effectively coordinated programmes. UNDG partners are continuing efforts to explore ways in which existing procedures and practices can be further simplified while maintaining appropriate levels of accountability and quality. Areas of focus include the simplification of documentation, the streamlining of reporting requirements and the coordination of in-country programming processes, such as mid-term reviews, country programme preparation and programme implementation.

87. Simplified and harmonized administrative procedures for national project personnel hired by different United Nations organizations will be developed on the basis of an analysis by UNDG, in accordance with current practices of some country teams. The guidance notes on administrative procedures for national project personnel prepared by UNDG for this purpose could be a practical response to government calls for harmonization of the administrative procedures for national project personnel currently applied by different United Nations organizations.

88. In approaching every task of simplifying and harmonizing rules and procedures, it should be borne in mind that while the requirements or initiatives in this regard will usually originate at the operational level in the country, systematic progress cannot be achieved merely by actions at the country level without the firm support of headquarters. Major reforms on procedures require action at the headquarters level first.

B. Strengthening the resident coordinator system

89. In the three years under review, all the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/192 were operationalized and some progress was achieved on various fronts, including an improved resident coordinator selection process; a revised performance appraisal mechanism; better communication with and support to the field offices; improved coordination of the country team at the field level; and strengthening of the system's support to Governments, where requested, in coordinating external assistance in the pursuit of development goals. According to a questionnaire for the triennial comprehensive policy review, 47 of the 107 resident coordinators who responded rated the results of the reform initiatives in strengthening the system as extensive, while 59 per cent concluded that, to some extent, positive results had been achieved. Only one resident coordinator observed very little result.

The resident coordinator function

90. To widen the pool of prospective resident coordinators and strengthen the ownership of the resident coordinator function by all organizations of the United Nations system, further steps were taken through the Inter-Agency Advisory Panel. The competency assessment centre was engaged to assess the competency of resident coordinator candidates against the resident coordinator job description to ensure that qualified candidates with the right skill profile were kept on a roster.

When a resident coordinator post becomes vacant, the Panel presents its recommendation to the UNDP Administrator.[13] Since the competency assessment centre started operations in October 1998, a total of 144 candidates have been sponsored by ACC member organizations and assessed. It was agreed that by 2002, all newly appointed as well as incumbent resident coordinators will have completed the assessment. These mechanisms stress the collective action to achieve broad ownership of the resident coordinator system by the entire United Nations system.

91. In encouraging non-UNDP staff to take up the challenge of resident coordinator positions, the Inter-Agency Advisory Panel also sought to improve the gender balance of potential resident coordinator candidates by proposing special measures to recruit women candidates for resident coordinator posts (the measures were adopted by CCPOQ in June 2000). All ACC members agreed that greater efforts should be made to identify internal candidates with good potential, including those at the P-4 level, and that in the meantime external candidates should also be considered.

92. To date, 23 incumbent resident coordinators have been recruited from United Nations agencies other than UNDP and 29 are women, including 3 designates.[14] An evaluation by the competency assessment centre shows that all organizations involved, except one, consider the new selection mechanism, including competency assessment, to be an improvement over the earlier procedures and much more satisfactory from an inter-agency point of view.

93. The performance appraisal system has also been improved. A new performance appraisal system of resident coordinators, based on acquired experience with the previous systems, is being established, to include the appraisal of resident coordinators by the executive heads of the ACC member organizations; the 180-degree feedback[15] exercise, which is at the pilot phase in 10 countries; and the institutionalized self-appraisal of the United Nations country teams in the annual reports of the resident coordinators. The preparation of the annual report is an opportunity for the resident coordinator and the country team to self-assess their performance against the annual work plan.

Country teams

94. Field-level coordination and a participatory approach in the functioning of the resident coordinator system have always been stressed as the means to focus limited resources on priority areas and to avoid duplication. In its resolution 53/192, the General Assembly once again reiterated the point and encouraged, inter alia, greater use of thematic groups.

95. Over the past three years, there has been an increase in the number of theme groups, ranging over a variety of issues. The most prominent themes observed include HIV/AIDS, gender, poverty alleviation, education, and health and nutrition. The theme groups facilitate better dialogue and interaction of the country team and, in some cases, with national partners through policy dialogue. Good practices in this aspect are abundant. However, some resident coordinators also noted in their reports that the theme groups create additional workload and tax the country team's resources/capacity, so that the meetings of the theme groups often become merely information-sharing. This is confirmed by the CCA/UNDAF evaluation, which recommends vigorous trimming of the number of theme groups and more meaningful and substantive cooperation, including joint strategic planning and

collaborative programming. The external evaluation of CCA/UNDAF cited the excessive use of thematic groups and their duplication, especially as compared with other exercises that make use of them (i.e., the Comprehensive Development Framework, PRSPs, sector-wide approaches and donor coordination arrangements). Meanwhile, available data also show that the theme groups, with support from a dedicated staff, usually generate more substantive cooperation in the area of joint planning, joint programmes and, in a few cases, resource mobilization. The improved functioning and coherence of a country team tend to correlate closely with how participatory its theme groups are and how effectively they work. The involvement of government representatives, donors and other international and national development partners in the thematic groups varies widely.

96. In order to improve support to field-level operation, ACC and UNDG have enhanced their efforts in improving communications with resident coordinators and the country teams and providing policy guidance, training and substantive and management support, through: (a) issuing a number of guidelines and guidance notes on key operational and programme issues; (b) reaching the field offices via improved RCNet and the newly launched Devlink;[16] (c) streamlining the training management mechanism and revising training materials for the resident coordinator induction programme, including support to CCA/UNDAF by the field offices/regional commissions; and (d) continuing to provide dedicated resident coordinator resources for coordination activities from UNDP.

97. Nonetheless, challenges remain: the relationship of the resident coordinator system with Governments and other development partners needs particular attention. The majority of the resident coordinators acknowledged in their responses to the questionnaire that further efforts should be made to involve other development partners, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral donors and civil society. There is also room to reinvigorate the commitment of all United Nations organizations to the resident coordinator system. It is important, in particular, to have more substantive coordination in the area of joint programming, to delegate a uniform level of authority to the field level, and to simplify and harmonize procedures (see sect. C below for initiatives under way). Given that the United Nations system is better positioned to share experience within a country and between countries, more creative means should be sought to share best practices. An effective performance appraisal system, with linkage to competency assessment and opportunity for future career development, could encourage high morale and considerably enhance the functioning of the resident coordinator system.

C. Common premises and sharing of administrative services

98. As a key component of the United Nations programme of reform, several measures have been taken to support the planning, implementation and oversight of the United Nations house programme and advance common services initiatives. A clear definition and criteria for the identification of United Nations houses was endorsed by the Secretary-General on 10 February 1998. A new methodology for the selection and analysis of opportunities to establish additional common premises/United Nations houses and an executive decision-making process to facilitate the entire process were put in place. In addition, the guidelines on the administrative management of the resident coordinator system, approved by CCPOQ in September 1998 on behalf of ACC, have been developed to help to promote

common services by providing a basis for their equitable co-management by user entities. Subsequently, new guidelines on operational management of common services were developed, in consultation with operations managers from the field, to facilitate the implementation of common and shared services at the country level. Guidance and support are being provided to country teams to promote the establishment and enhancement of common premises and sharing of administrative services.

Common premises/United Nations houses

99. A total of 41 United Nations houses were inaugurated or designated between 1996 and December 2000. Since 1998, the UNDG Management Group on Services and Premises has been regularly reviewing proposals from country teams, examining possibilities for sharing common premises in a cost-efficient manner and meeting the requirements for a United Nations house. The Management Group reviewed 55 proposals in 1998, 58 in 1999 and 32 in 2000. In 2000, the pace of proposals being submitted to the Management Group had slowed as the more straightforward opportunities for establishing United Nations houses had already been examined, and where criteria had been met, United Nations houses had been designated in 1998 and 1999. Recognizing this, the Management Group identified and contacted 43 countries where there might be potential for establishing a United Nations house. Since 1998, the UNDG Management Group has undertaken 30 missions, six of them in 2000. A total of 38 countries were visited on these missions, sometimes on more than one occasion, to offer technical support to country teams in locating and working out logistics of establishing United Nations houses. The support of the Management Group, especially through the missions, was cited in the resident coordinator annual reports of 2000 as very useful to the country teams in negotiating with Governments and evaluating potential premises.

100. During the period from 1996 to 2000, the results indicated in table 3 were achieved.

Table 3
Establishment of common premises/United Nations houses, 1996-2000

Date	*Status*	*No.*	*Countries*
1996-1997	Inaugurated/designated	4	Lesotho, Malaysia, Russian Federation, South Africa
1998	Inaugurated/designated	26	Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Comoros, Costa Rica, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Honduras, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Swaziland, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates
1999	Inaugurated/designated	6	Belgium, Belize, Latvia, Pakistan, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine
2000	Inaugurated/designated	5	Bahrain, Botswana, Ecuador, Gambia, Slovakia
2001-2004	Proposed United Nations houses under consideration		The target is set for five United Nations houses to be designated in 2001 and to bring the total to at least 50 by 2004

101. A consolidated common database and lease management maintenance software (Aperture) was developed during 1997 and 1998 and completed in 1999 to facilitate the management of country office premises. Updating and enhancing Aperture and the production of management reports has been an ongoing effort.

Common services

102. Based on the CCPOQ guidelines on the administrative management of the resident coordinator system covering the area of common services, the UNDG Management Group on Services and Premises is developing tools and guidelines on the implementation of common and shared services. As a first step, the Group collected systematic information on the current status of and experience with common or shared services in country offices. Data were received from 126 country offices, supplying information from 446 questionnaires from UNDG and non-UNDG agencies. A database on common services was established as a result. As a follow-up to this survey, the UNDG, with the support of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, organized a workshop on common services to evaluate experience to date and to develop operational guidelines for the enhancement of the effective and efficient operation of common services at the country level. On the basis of this information and best practices, the UNDG Management Group has developed guidelines, including model service agreements, which could be adapted by country teams, possible standards for the provision of services and indicators for service performance measurement, and suggestions for management of the common services as well as related accountability and cost-recovery matters.

103. The most recent questionnaire addressed to the United Nations resident coordinator system produced the results given in table 4.

Table 4
Percentage of common or shared main administrative services achieved by United Nations country teams

	100	*90-71*	*70-51*	*50-25*	*<25*	*0*
Financial	3.1	4.1	16.3	29.6	35.7	11.2
Security	50.0	33.0	9.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
Personnel-related services	2.0	9.9	14.9	33.7	30.7	8.9
Conference facilities	13.9	14.9	18.8	15.0	23.8	12.9
Telecommunications and information technology	2.0	17.6	20.6	22.5	30.4	6.9
Transportation	-	1.0	8.1	10.1	41.4	39.4
Procurement/contracting	1.0	3.0	8.9	18.8	40.6	27.7
Liaison (administrative) services	1.0	7.2	18.6	25.8	32.0	15.5

Table 5
Time frames established by United Nations country teams to achieve full common administrative services
(Percentages)

	No time frame	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005 or beyond*
Financial	85.2	5.7	3.4	2.3	2.3	1.0
Security	46.7	44.0	6.7	1.3	1.3	-
Personnel-related services	80.2	5.8	5.8	2.3	3.5	2.3
Conference facilities	62.2	14.6	12.2	6.1	2.4	2.4
Telecommunications and information technology	52.9	24.1	14.9	6.9	2.3	-
Transportation	83.0	2.3	8.0	1.1	3.4	2.3
Procurement/contracting	67.4	9.0	13.5	6.7	3.4	1.1
Liaison (administrative) services	66.7	14.3	11.9	6.0	2.4	-

104. The data contained in table 5 shows that although over 25 per cent of common/shared services have been achieved in basically all main administrative services except transportation and procurement/contracting, only security and telecommunications and information technology could achieve about 50 per cent of sharing by the year 2002. To improve this situation, the operational guidelines for the implementation of common services were approved by UNDG and adopted by CCPOQ on behalf of ACC in September 2000. UNDG has developed a proposal to field-test the guidelines in some pilot countries starting in 2001, in order to further improve the guidelines and develop a global roll-out for common services implementation.

Lessons learned and challenges

105. Through the experience of UNDG during the first three years of the United Nations house initiative, the following lessons have been learned:

(a) Many existing premises are insufficient in size to accommodate the staff of the four UNDG executive committee members;

(b) In many cases, moving to a United Nations house may initially result in an uneven financial burden, with some organizations experiencing benefits while others incur higher costs. Therefore, there is a need for support for these initiatives, especially during initial stages, when set-up costs can overshadow long-term cost benefits;

(c) The modality of seeking appropriate and ready-to-occupy rent-free premises from Governments needs to be pursued further and more aggressively, as it is the most cost-effective modality in establishing a United Nations house;

(d) Obtaining land grants from the Government for the construction of office buildings by UNDG participating organizations tends to be the highest-risk and least preferred modality for the establishment of United Nations houses;

(e) The use of outsourced professional and technical expertise has been a valuable element in analysing proposals from country teams;

(f) The harmonization of terms and conditions of the basic cooperation agreements of UNDG partners in regard to the provision of office space would facilitate negotiations with Governments;

(g) To facilitate common services at the country level, there is a need to harmonize administrative services and training in administrative practices and common services;

(h) The rapidly advancing technology should be put to further use to increase cohesion and cooperation at the country level, for example, by sharing information technology services, establishing a global information network on lessons learned and good practices, and creating virtual United Nations houses when actual United Nations houses are not possible.

106. Experience to date has indicated that many such challenges can be overcome through active dialogue between participating agencies.

D. Monitoring and evaluation

107. The legislation emanating from the three most recent triennial policy reviews included provisions designed to improve the contribution of monitoring and evaluation of operational activities to the effectiveness and impact of those activities. The principles on which this legislation was based were the need: (a) to involve national authorities in monitoring and evaluation and to strengthen their capacity to undertake and use the results obtained from it; (b) to move the focus of monitoring and evaluation away from project-level issues and a concern for inputs towards questions of programme effectiveness and impact; (c) to encourage joint evaluations so that all elements of United Nations programmes in a country will be assessed coherently and feedback is provided to those who need and can use it; and (d) to focus on using the results of evaluations to improve the effectiveness and impact of operational activities of the United Nations system and to determine the most effective ways they can contribute to Member States.

108. The United Nations system has been regularly consulted about the appropriateness and utility of this legislation and has indicated its support for it. It is clear that many United Nations agencies have devoted careful thought, human resources and effort to achieving the above ends. Nonetheless, all impact evaluations refer either to an absence of an institutional memory of the United Nations system or to the weakness thereof, particularly at the country level, and the need for greater learning from experience by the United Nations system. Many entities within as well as outside the United Nations development system have diligently addressed the problem of learning lessons and feeding them back into operations over the years. Typical measures that different parts of the system have taken include electronic databases, formal inclusion of lessons learned in programme and project reviews, and training and other related mechanisms.

109. Expenditure on the monitoring and evaluation of operational activities is reported to be close to 1 per cent of programme resources. This means that if operational activities involve $4.5 billion per annum, some $45 million is being spent in their monitoring and evaluation. According to the current six impact

evaluations (as well as the previous six), they do not appear to be having the desired effect in terms of feedback. This leads to the question of whether the United Nations system and Member States are receiving the best return on the use of these resources.

110. It has been noted elsewhere that there is a trend away from project-level activities and a general move towards strategic and policy issues. This has not been necessarily accompanied by a consequent and equivalent shift in the focus of monitoring and evaluation away from technical concerns of issues of project management towards more strategic concerns of country-level effectiveness and programme and organizational impact.

111. Nevertheless, a number of United Nations entities are clearly endeavouring to move in this direction. One such example is the UNDP results-oriented annual report and its move towards results-based management. Another is the efforts of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to devise indicators of corporate performance. The endeavours of UNICEF to link its work to the quantitative goals of the World Summit for Children have been well documented.

112. In its resolution 55/162 of 14 December 2000 on follow-up to the Millennium Summit, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General urgently to prepare a long-term "road map" towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration within the United Nations system and to focus on the results and benchmarks achieved, identify gaps in implementation and strategies for reducing them, and highlight in particular cross-sectoral issues and cross-cutting themes on development and peace and security.

113. This provides the basic framework against which most future operational activities should be judged. Work remains to be done in translating these millennial goals into targets to be used at the agency, country or regional level. The United Nations system has already made significant progress in this area. For instance, there is a matrix of indicators and targets which is to be used by United Nations country teams when preparing their common country assessments.

114. However, additional work is needed, both by specialized agencies for sectoral goals and by United Nations entities dealing with cross-cutting issues, such as HIV/AIDS, drug abuse or capacity-building, to elaborate the benchmarks, targets and indicators that can be used in the design of national and, where appropriate, regional programmes designed to reduce all aspects of poverty. The capacity-building aspects of poverty eradication require further work if appropriate indicators are to be applied. As noted in the publication that emerged from the first round of the evaluations,[17] any assessment system or set of indicators for capacity-building must go beyond the application of the narrow, reductionist, somewhat mechanistic measurement systems that are sometimes in evidence in the international development community. Inappropriate monitoring systems can seriously distort programme design and management and can damage the very performance that most participants are seeking.

115. Despite legitimate concerns about a lack of agreed definitions, benchmarks, indicators, data and institutional memory, each of the impact evaluation teams was able to make some definite assessments about the quality of United Nations system operations and their impact. This suggests that there is relevant substance to be drawn from "reflective practitioners" talking to reflective actors and that much more

could be learned about how to eradicate poverty successfully if all relevant United Nations entities were to internalize this process and elaborate, for their respective fields, the basic standards to use in assessing monitoring and evaluation of United Nations operational activities, the basic lessons that can be learned from such a dialogue and a method for feeding back any lessons learned into operations.

E. Field structure

116. Field structure should be examined not only as a country office of a United Nations system organization but even more as an integral part of national development infrastructure. The staffing of the offices should be demand-responsive and reflect the needs and requirements that might be placed on the organization, to be determined in consultation with the Government. In the disposition of the substantive skills of an organization, the minimum but time-bound capacities at the individual country level necessary for rapid and effective response should be a major factor. The General Assembly, in its resolution 53/192, called for the United Nations system skill profile to be tailored to national development needs rather than determined by the institutional structure of the United Nations. This important decision has to be operationalized.

117. Not all specialized agencies have field presence; this is particularly the case for the smaller, but often the more technically and technologically oriented agencies. Measures must be implemented to ensure that a lack of field presence does not lead to depriving the country of the needed multilateral assistance. While the agencies' scale of operations may not warrant wide field presence and budgetary constraints in fact virtually prohibit such a course, a selective and limited representation in countries where their area of specialty is of high priority might be considered.

F. Involvement of specialized agencies

118. An integral part of the United Nations development system is the specialized agencies. Their full and substantive participation as partners in United Nations system development work is essential. They are the repositories in large measure of the technical capacities of the United Nations system. Important changes have occurred in the relationship with the specialized agencies in the past two decades in response to changing development trends and requirements. It is essential to mobilize the technical expertise of the agencies, which are an integral part of the United Nations system, since it can make a sizeable contribution to the system's ability to meet development challenges.

119. One of the concerns about the functioning of the system has been that the bulk of its technical and substantive capabilities has been concentrated at headquarters, to be deployed on the basis of need and requests from the country offices. Resources and the locus of expertise at all levels — global, regional, national — should be commensurate with functions and responsibilities. While there are important global tasks that require a strong global presence, substantive skills required to backstop country demands should be within easy reach. Owing to budgetary constraints, some agencies have in fact reduced their staff at the country level. The focus of development is local and the locus of United Nations system expertise for development cooperation should also be, in large measure, local. The global "think

tank" function and normative work of the agencies are crucial, but they are set into motion as backstopping in response to specific situations and requests, and they should complement each other.

120. Recent efforts by some organizations towards establishing or strengthening subregional offices and regionalization have to be kept in tandem with creating a country-focused critical mass of substantive expertise for rapid response. In the changing context of growing country-specific but rapidly shifting needs, greater reliance on field presence and expertise is necessary. Setting up subregional offices is a step forward, but they cannot substitute for the need for local, specific and rapid response. There is a need for closer integration of agencies' approaches on subjects of common concern, such as food security and poverty reduction, at the country level. Representatives of United Nations agencies function in dual capacities in the field: as representatives of the concerned organization and as members of the resident coordinator system, and thus must be able to function in such a way that they complement and draw upon each other's expertise.

121. The role and relevance of United Nations specialized agencies will become more pivotal in the emerging knowledge society. The specialized agencies are also technological organizations. The integrated approach to development and the development of such sectors as agriculture, health, industry and communications are two sides of the same coin. Growth and higher productivity in such sectors as agriculture is essential for integrated and sustainable development. Many developing countries need an international organization to provide information and help in the search for scrutiny of and access to technological data. The United Nations system has to respond to such requests. The concept of "shared skills" between the organizations of the United Nations system at the country level also needs to be pursued to achieve economies of scale and enhanced effectiveness.

G. Cooperation with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund

122. As indicated in the management plan for implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192, strengthening the interaction between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions in the area of operational activities has focused on four main elements: closer linkages regarding arrangements for development support, increased policy dialogue, greater efforts to ensure a practical impact and enhanced cooperation at the country level.

123. During the period under review, a joint exploratory review of relations between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions was undertaken, which included numerous recommendations that are applicable at the policy level, at the headquarters level and at the level of country operations.[18]

124. The common country assessment and UNDAF guidelines specifically include the encouragement of collaboration and invite the Bretton Woods institutions to participate in country teams for the formulation of these instruments.

125. At the same time, upon the adoption of the Comprehensive Development Framework, the World Bank proposed to the United Nations system that it should stimulate exchanges and participation in this work by members of UNDG and by other agencies of the United Nations system. This was expanded to cover exchanges

of information and experience in relation to the PRSP process when it was introduced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

126. Progressively broader and more substantive inter-agency discussions have been held at intervals on these experiences. At the field level, country teams have been active in relation to some of the frameworks launched by the Bretton Woods institutions and have recently been contributing ideas and proposals to help Governments and the Bretton Woods institutions take into account important elements that had been inadequately covered.

127. Most resident coordinators believe that this collaboration focuses on information-sharing and on supporting the capacity of Governments to mobilize and coordinate donor engagement and resources. Regarding collaboration and participation in each other's programmes and projects, results are mixed, ranging from moderate to significant involvement of the respective organizations. This was also the pattern regarding involvement in the common country assessment and UNDAF processes, as well as United Nations system involvement in Bretton Woods institutions mechanisms, such as the Comprehensive Development Framework and PRSP processes.

128. Potential areas for future cooperation include more intensive cooperation on their strategic and programming frameworks and initiatives, closer collaboration in the functioning of the resident coordinator system and implementation of plans of action of global conferences and the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

H. Cooperation with regional development banks

129. In its resolution 53/192, the General Assembly encouraged greater cooperation between the regional banks and all funds and programmes of the United Nations system. The extent of collaboration is currently quite limited, but has considerable potential for growth.

130. The great majority of resident coordinators and Governments feel that there is a good degree of information-sharing between the United Nations system and the regional banks. Many resident coordinators also believe that the United Nations system and the banks show some degree of collaboration in programmes and projects and in supporting government capacity for coordination of interactions with donors and for resource mobilization. United Nations agencies are in some instances involved in identification, design, supervision and/or implementation of regional bank projects.

131. In particular, WHO and FAO report growing collaboration with the regional banks to take on new programmes related, for example, to the HIV/AIDS epidemic or to drug control.

132. With respect to the direction of current work and interest in the regional banks, the African Development Bank adopted a new vision statement in 1999, calling for greater partnership with the Bretton Woods institutions, the organizations of the United Nations system, bilateral agencies, the private sector, civil society and NGOs.

133. The Asian Development Bank in March 2001 launched a new long-term strategy to help developing member countries eradicate extreme poverty by 2015, in

keeping with the international development goals agreed in recent United Nations-sponsored global conferences. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which was involved in creating the Asian Bank, continues to have a close relationship with it.

134. Close collaboration continues to be in effect between the Inter-American Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as with other United Nations organizations at the country level, especially in support of the economic integration of Latin America.

135. Views expressed by several United Nations agencies suggest that regional banks could reassess their lending portfolios in the light of international conferences and conventions, priorities for reaching international development targets (e.g., development targets for 2015) and related sectoral priorities.

136. In that regard, there may be ways for combining the financial strength and expertise of the regional banks with the analytical, advocacy, technical and other skills of the United Nations system. The comparative advantages of the various institutions could produce greater synergy and impact of efforts in response to national requests.

VIII. Evolving dimensions of operational activities

A. Humanitarian assistance, peace-building and development

137. United Nations interventions in crisis and post-crisis situations, an important part of United Nations work at the country level during the past decade, will continue to pose a mounting challenge to the United Nations development system, underscoring an increasing intersection between peace and development, peacemaking and peace-building, human rights and humanitarian assistance, relief and reconstruction. According to one estimate, there are as many as 45 countries that are termed as special development situations. The General Assembly has been calling for a comprehensive approach, including the early application of development tools in humanitarian emergencies.

138. In 1999, the Security Council invited the Economic and Social Council to contribute to the development of a long-term support programme for Haiti. In 2000, the General Assembly requested the Economic and Social Council to consider establishing an advisory group on countries emerging from conflict in Africa, and the Council was expected to respond to this request at the high-level segment on Africa to be held at its substantive session of 2001. In the presidential statement following the Security Council's meeting in February 2001 on a comprehensive approach to peace-building (S/PRST/2001/5), the Council noted that peace-building encompasses a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms.

139. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/502), virtually every part of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, is currently engaged in one form of peace-building or another, because peace-building embraces many activities, including political, military, diplomatic, development,

human rights, child protection, gender, humanitarian assistance and many other issues.

140. At the country level, United Nations resident coordinators, normally responsible for development cooperation, also serve as humanitarian coordinators, where needed.

141. Country teams consulted for the triennial comprehensive policy review expressed mixed views on the effectiveness of the interactions among relief, development and the political and peace operations of the United Nations, as well as of the linkages among the consolidated appeals process and the common country assessment and UNDAF processes. Similar views were expressed on the linkages among the resident coordinator, humanitarian coordinator and special representative of the Secretary-General functions. To help strengthen and clarify these interrelationships, the Secretary-General issued a guidance note on the subject in December 2000.

142. Consultations with the system and Member States suggested that greater emphasis should be given to coordination and consultations among all these areas.

143. From the perspective of development cooperation, it is relevant that the resident coordinator system is working in the country before, during and after crises, and can thus contribute significantly to a critical continuum in this process.

144. The strategic framework approach applied in specific areas has identified relevant principles and relationships. Accordingly, elements of this approach may be applicable in many countries, reinforcing the importance of a comprehensive approach.

145. Strengthening the United Nations country-level capacity to implement such a comprehensive approach will ensure more coherence. Both the common country assessment and UNDAF offer a significant opportunity to identify and implement preventive and post-conflict peace-building strategies. The peace-building process requires coherence in the immediate and longer-term analysis, planning and programming. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes are well situated at the country level to help meet the challenge, particularly through the resident coordinator system, although competence at the country level in this area may require adjustments.

146. Recognizing that the most serious challenge to sustainable development is conflict, UNDG is working to ensure that peace-building and conflict prevention concerns are integrated in the common country assessments, UNDAFs and emergency or recovery plans. These concerns can be addressed only in close partnership with national Governments and civil society.

B. Human rights, including the right to development

147. In its resolution 53/192, the General Assembly recognized human rights, including the right to development, as an important element of the development cooperation efforts of the United Nations system.[19]

148. The United Nations Millennium Declaration gives special emphasis to the promotion of democracy, strengthening the rule of law and respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the

right to development. It reiterates the importance of upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and promoting civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all.

149. The greater majority of the country teams report that Governments in programme countries are requesting increased support in implementing international conventions and support in capacity-building in the area of human rights. Member States confirm the same evolution.

150. A number of country teams report the involvement of the resident coordinator system in implementing the United Nations mandates in human rights, including the right to development through consultations and advocacy, human rights outreach and education and programme planning, but results vary from country to country.

151. The United Nations system has committed itself to a more explicit and consistent human rights approach. Some of its individual organizations have a long and significant involvement, while for others the implications of this evolution have not yet been fully internalized.

152. The common country assessment and UNDAF guidelines adopted by UNDG in 1999 include attention to human rights issues in the programming of development cooperation throughout the United Nations system. Thereafter, agencies of the system devised a set of guidelines and related information on human rights for use by the resident coordinator system. On behalf of ACC, CCPOQ approved the document in March 2000. The guidelines treat human rights principles and mechanisms, ways to approach and assist Governments and means of integrating human rights into work programmes.

153. The common country assessment and UNDAF have provided a vehicle for mobilizing attention to these issues since demands for technical cooperation linked to human rights are growing and changing. Formerly treated primarily as a separate field of technical assistance, human rights are increasingly expected to be integrated into key thematic areas of development cooperation, in particular in relation to poverty, gender and governance. Consequently, the capacity of country teams to address human rights issues needs to be enhanced.

C. Information and communication technologies

154. Information and communication technologies are now at the hinge of global change, the knowledge gap and the cutting edge of competition. Communication technologies are also loosening monopolistic control over information, promoting transparency and accountability. The emerging knowledge-based and networked economy is also changing the contrast and dynamics of development. A wired or wireless society is a more open society.

155. The world information market grew by 12.2 per cent a year from 1985 to 1995, and continues to grow. This rate is almost three times the growth rate of world gross domestic product (GDP). However, a large number of developing countries have lagged behind. Electronic communications, so commonplace in the North, are still scarce in the South. The digital divide is real. By any measure, whether number of telephones, of Internet users and providers or of computers, developing countries lag. Wide disparities persist within the South as well. For example, sub-Saharan Africa has just one phone for every 5,300 people. The polarization of

communications correspond to the urban-rural divide. In parts of Asia and Africa, rural telephone density is just one fifth of that in the largest cities. Even the goal of bringing a telephone within easy access of every global inhabitant by the end of the twentieth century has not been reached.

156. Despite the backlog and impediments, new technologies offer new hopes and opportunities. The plummeting cost of IT makes it less capital-intensive and more affordable to less affluent societies. The high cost of fully developed physical infrastructure, a major development impediment in many developing societies, may also be overcome with the use of IT. Infrastructure is still critical, but it is an infrastructure of knowledge, knowledge workers and knowledge farmers with the ability to access, search and use information.

157. The chronic shortage of schools, teachers, doctors and markets in remote areas can now be overcome through virtual schools, telemedicine and telemarketing. The Internet has provided farmers and workers with instant access to critical information. It can open marketing doors to small and medium-sized enterprises without expensive infrastructure. It is a powerful tool for poverty reduction and the empowerment of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable. In the all-important area of agricultural productivity and food security, biotechnology and new farming, such new technologies offer an immense opportunity because they are less field- and scale-specific and more plant-specific. They lend themselves to application by small and marginal farmers, the bulk of the rural poor. Remote-sensing technologies offer pinpoint accuracy concerning what exists on the ground, an invaluable tool to planners and administrators.

158. Although a majority of countries are critically short of basic communications infrastructure, a number of developing countries are seizing the opportunity opened by information technology. For example, they are using the potential of these technologies to stimulate exports, microchips and software, to position specific priority industries globally and for improved administrative services. A major breakthrough is in the area of good governance. E-governance is one of the pillars of the IT edifice and a means to move towards a more open, responsive, accountable and transparent system. It includes wide and extensive use of videoconferencing for dissemination, monitoring and evaluating the performance of public officials. Online registration of legal deeds and one-stop services for citizens are made possible.

159. The international development community can backstop national efforts and make a crucial difference. Many organizations of the United Nations system are involved in assisting countries by offering policy advice and technical assistance. Several United Nations system organizations, including specialized agencies, have activities that use IT as a management tool, for information outreach and in their technical cooperation. The United Nations has launched the Health InterNetwork for developing countries and the United Nations Information Technology Service. The Global Development Gateway of the World Bank is another example. A brief indication of some aspects of IT was included in the previous report of the Secretary-General on operational activities (see E/2000/46/Add.1), mostly related to connectivity and United Nations system web sites.

160. The ministerial declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council at the high-level segment of its substantive session of 2000 succinctly captures the current state of knowledge and the actions to be taken by various partners. The declaration was endorsed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and thus constitutes a

major mandate to the United Nations system. The Council called for the establishment of an information and communication technology (ICT) task force to promote the use of ICT as a cutting-edge tool for development. Pursuant to that mandate, the Secretary-General constituted a high-level ICT advisory group and undertook worldwide consultations, and on the basis of the outcome of those consultations the Council authorized the Secretary-General to set up the task force. A major intergovernmental initiative outside the United Nations system is the setting-up of the Digital Opportunity Task Force by the group of eight major industrialized nations. The forthcoming International Telecommunication Union (ITU)-sponsored World Summit of the Information Society, to be held in 2003, will review the role of communications, investment and technology in creating the information society infrastructure and in bridging the digital divide.

161. The ministerial declaration, among other things, called upon the international organizations, funds and programmes and United Nations specialized agencies to facilitate the transfer of ICT, in particular, to developing countries and to support efforts towards capacity-building and the production of content. Through its operational activities, the United Nations development system can contribute to this process. Not only can its effectiveness and impact be greatly enhanced with the use of ICT, but the United Nations system can also develop innovative modalities for strengthening the ICT capacity of developing countries. Knowledge networking is emerging as a key area of development and requires much more active United Nations system support. ICT can be integrated and applied in all sectors of programmes in innovative ways. Agencies are seeking to expand their capacities and systems and are developing programmes to respond to and make use of the transformations taking place, but for the whole area of ICT for development, huge and innovative new steps need to be taken.

162. The task is sectoral as well as cross-sectoral, involving both United Nations specialized agencies, including the World Bank, and United Nations funds and programmes. Resident coordinators have reported that as many as 40 per cent of programme countries have expressed interest in seeking United Nations assistance in mobilizing ICT as a tool of development. Half the responding countries have identified technology transfer and assistance in obtaining access to foreign skills as one of their least successful areas in receiving assistance. Given their growing importance, information and communication technologies for development require growing attention from organizations of the United Nations system.

D. Gender in development

163. In paragraphs 25, 46 and 47 of its resolution 53/192, the General Assembly emphasized the need for mainstreaming gender in United Nations operational activities in all fields and urged that measures be taken to improve gender balance in the Secretariat. In the three years under review, commitment to this issue has been increasingly strong and some progress has been achieved.

Mainstreaming gender

164. Gender perspective has been given consistent consideration in country programme/project design (for a detailed assessment of progress in implementing the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2000, see

E/CN.6/2000/3). Among the more than 100 resident coordinators responding to the triennial comprehensive policy review questionnaire, 66 per cent and 79 per cent respectively acknowledge significant gender mainstreaming in the formulation of programmes and projects, and in the common country assessment/UNDAF. The responses of donor and recipient countries to the same questions reveal a similar pattern.

165. The special session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in June 2000, has given further impetus to the issue of gender mainstreaming.

166. The common country assessment/UNDAF exercises provide all United Nations agencies with a systematic entry point to mainstream gender in their operational activities. The UNDG Subgroup on Gender has been actively involved from the very beginning in the preparation and piloting of the common country assessment/ UNDAF guidelines and their pilot implementation. As a result, the gender perspective is adequately reflected in the common country assessment/UNDAF guidelines, and the common country assessment indicators contain sex-disaggregated parameters.

167. The theme group approach has been widely used at the country level to tackle this cross-cutting issue. Fifty-eight theme groups were operating at the field level in 1998, and in 1999 the number increased to 68. The areas where the theme groups/ task forces on gender are active include advocacy, support to host Governments in legislation, technical support in capacity-building and community-level interventions. The annual reports of the resident coordinators reveal that many workshops were held to sensitize policy makers and government officials, as well as United Nations staff, about gender issues. Training sessions, for example, were also organized for the statistics branches of recipient Governments on the concept of sex-disaggregated data and the collection and analysis thereof. Efforts were also made to involve local NGOs in the national legislation process and the implementation of the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

168. Responses to the questionnaires sent out to the field confirm the special attention paid to women at the project level.[20] Several agencies affirmed that community-based projects, such as projects on microfinancing and reusable resources, are usually targeted at women as part of poverty alleviation programmes. An exemplary case is the United Nations girls' education initiative launched by the Secretary-General in April 2000. The initiative aims to mount a sustained campaign to improve the quality and availability of girls' education through a collaborative partnership of different entities within and outside the United Nations system.

169. Networks of gender focal points and gender specialists also enable various United Nations agencies to take advantage of the existing expertise on gender within the system. For example, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has maintained and sought to expand its network of regional gender advisers. UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNESCO all maintain their own network of gender focal points. However, there is a need to avoid duplication and establish a system-wide pool of gender resources and expertise.

170. Efforts have also been made in the area of training and capacity-building.[21] UNICEF and the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention prepared internal guidelines on gender for programme officers. WFP held training

workshops on gender. UNIFEM has completed a concept paper on gender mainstreaming in the common country assessment/UNDAF, which will be the basis for designing a training module at the United Nations Staff College. Notwithstanding this progress, this area continues to be identified by several agencies as the most challenging one. United Nations staff need further training to maintain a gender perspective, effectively collect sex-disaggregated data and generate gender-sensitive analysis, disseminating good practices.[22]

Improving gender balance

171. An administrative instruction (ST/AI/1999/9) on special measures to recruit women has been issued with the aim of accelerating the pace of achieving gender balance in the Secretariat. As a result, the representation of women has improved at the D-1 level. The number of women at that level increased from 77 (28.4 per cent) as at 31 December 1999 to 88 (30 per cent) as at 30 November 2000 (for more information, see E/CN.6/2001/4). Similarly, the UNDG Executive Committee approved special measures to recruit women candidates for resident coordinator posts (adopted by CCPOQ in June 2000). At present, 29[23] of the 140 resident coordinators are women.

E. Regional dimensions

172. In its resolution 53/192, the General Assembly stressed the growing need to incorporate regional and subregional dimensions in United Nations operational activities, encouraging resident coordinators, in consultation with Governments, to secure greater involvement of United Nations regional commissions in the common country assessment and UNDAF.

173. The research in preparation for the triennial comprehensive policy review found some evidence of greater regional and subregional perspectives in the activities of United Nations organizations than previously, including in annual reports of the resident coordinator. In part, this reflects the regional aspects of globalization issues. Also, the processes related to the five-year reviews of United Nations global conferences have included attention to regional outcomes. The issues raised in the Secretary-General's 1998 report on regional cooperation and the related Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998 have somewhat increased the level of interest and relevant activities.

174. Consistent with the request of the General Assembly, the common country assessment and UNDAF guidelines adopted in 1999 included references to regional commission involvement. Regional training sessions on UNDAF familiarization in 2000 were conducted for each of the regional commissions to further stimulate their participation in common country assessments and UNDAF. Positive results are beginning to be seen.

175. The ACC guidelines on regional dimensions of the work of the United Nations system were adopted in 1999. UNDP and the regional commissions also signed a strategic compact in 2000 to strengthen their policy and operational cooperation, in terms of consultations, information exchange and joint efforts.

176. A great majority of country teams believe that regional perspectives are included in the operational activities of the United Nations system. In contrast,

about 60 per cent of the country teams and several Member States declared that the United Nations regional commissions are very little involved in common country assessment and UNDAF preparations. Most agree that possible constraints preventing the effective addressing of regional dimensions in national development are insufficient funding, non-involvement of regional and subregional entities, and complications concerning national ownership of regional activities.

177. Some agencies, such as WHO, FAO, ILO and WFP, report traditionally strong regional and subregional field structures for service delivery. The work of others, such as ITU and the Universal Postal Union (UPU), is largely regional and global. Still others focus considerable effort on cross-border phenomena and their implications, for example in drug trafficking, migratory flows or the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) are examples of this approach. WFP has been taking measures for further decentralization, thereby strengthening regional and subregional offices.

178. An important concern is the strengthening of the relationships with other regional and interregional organizations (e.g., Organization of African Unity (OAU), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), British Commonwealth) and encouraging them to devote more attention to particular issues. UNICEF and WFP report efforts to this end.

179. Regional commissions have also been increasingly active in engaging other entities of the United Nations system in joint or supplementary funding of certain operational activities.

180. Among the suggested steps for strengthening the relationship with the regional commissions, the following can be singled out:

(a) All resident coordinator designates should have adequate preparation in dealing with regional issues, including the role of regional commissions;

(b) Focal points on common country assessment/UNDAF and resident coordinator issues should be established and/or strengthened in the regional commissions. Likewise, all resident coordinators should have focal points for relations with the regional commissions;

(c) Resident coordinators should ensure that all common country assessments and UNDAFs include appropriate consideration of the regional dimension, including the involvement of the regional commissions;[24]

(d) Regional commissions could become regional outposts of UNAIDS, thereby further broadening its inter-agency and multinational reach;

(e) Subregional or regional common country assessments and UNDAFs could be initiated, in alignment with regional programmes of United Nations funds, programmes regional commissions and specialized agencies;

(f) The sharing of experience and best practices in the area of regional and subregional cooperation should be increased. This could be built into the annual regional coordination meetings.

F. Technical and economic cooperation among developing countries

181. The General Assembly, in its resolution 53/192, and the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2000/20 of 28 July 2000, both urged the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system to intensify efforts to mainstream the modality of technical and economic cooperation among developing countries (TCDC/ECDC) into their operational activities. During the period under review, according to recent reports (for more information on mainstreaming TCDC, see TCDC/12/1, TCDC/12/2 and TCDC/12/3) by the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system remained important agents for promoting and catalyzing technical and economic cooperation among developing countries, within their respective areas of competence.

182. All the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system have established TCDC focal points. Many of them have formulated new policy instruments to mainstream TCDC in accordance with the revised guidelines on TCDC[25] and pilot common results indicators.[26] Some made a conscious effort to develop and support innovative and distinctive TCDC programmes to ensure sustainability and greater impact, such as the FAO Special Programme for Food Security or the International Trade Centre South-South Trade Promotion Programme. Most of the TCDC activities catalyzed by the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, were carried out at the subregional, regional and interregional levels. Knowledge networking and support to centres of excellence seemed to be the preferred means used by most organizations to build capacity, share best practices and expertise and conduct joint research and dialogue, to address either sectoral or broad issues of concern to a large number of developing countries, such as trade, intellectual property rights, population, postal services and HIV/AIDS.

183. UNDP remained the major provider of support to TCDC through its global, interregional, regional and country programmes. Most of its regional programmes were TCDC initiatives. The fact that over 50 per cent of the country cooperation frameworks referred to the TCDC modality indicate that TCDC has been increasingly used in UNDP programming. Furthermore, South-South cooperation was considered to be one of the priorities in the Administrator's business plan for 2000-2003.

Notes

[1] As of 15 August 2001.

[2] See, for example, General Assembly resolution 55/43, para. 7.

[3] See the statement made by the Secretary-General at a UNDP high-level ministerial meeting on the future of development assistance, New York, 11 September 2000.

[4] Information as of 26 July 2001. Source: United Nations Development Group Office.

[5] See E/CN.3/2001/16.

[6] As part of the ongoing reform of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, a new high-level committee on programme, superseding CCPOQ, and a high-level committee on management were created.

[7] A number of guidelines have been adopted by CCPOQ, such as a guidance note for the resident coordinator system on field-level follow-up to global conferences (1998), common country assessment guidelines (1998), guidelines on the functioning of the resident coordinator system (1999) and United Nations Development Framework guidelines (1999).

[8] Ghana, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique, Nepal and Philippines.

[9] Madagascar and Romania.

[10] Other areas where harmonization may be feasible include contractual modalities, recruitment procedures, insurance and performance assessment methods.

[11] Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe. The number of agencies involved in harmonization efforts varies from country to country. For example, in Zimbabwe, harmonization efforts involved all United Nations agencies. In Myanmar, harmonization efforts involved UNDP, UNFPA, WFP, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

[12] The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has approximately 3,000 national project personnel. UNDP estimates that the number of its national project personnel may be as high as 30,000. WHO does not have a national project personnel arrangement as such, although national personnel may be contracted under arrangements that fall broadly within the agreed definition.

[13] The UNDP Administrator is designated by the Secretary-General to manage and fund the resident coordinator system. It is the Administrator who makes the final submission of a resident coordinator nomination to the Secretary-General.

[14] Currently, there are 130 resident coordinators.

[15] The 180-degree appraisal refers to performance feedback to the United Nations resident coordinators by the members of the country team and performance feedback to the members of the United Nations country team by the resident coordinators. It is a feedback exercise of peers and by peers.

[16] These are in addition to the existing Intranet and Internet sites of the United Nations and all ACC member organizations, as well as the CCPOQ web site, which features guidelines, sessional reports and papers and other related information; see E/2000/46/Add.1, paras. 60 and 61.

[17] See *United Nations, Capacity-Building Supported by the United Nations: Some Evaluations and Some Lessons* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 99.II.A.4).

[18] See E/1998/61.

[19] The General Assembly noted, in this context, the activities of United Nations funds and programmes aimed at providing technical assistance to recipient countries, in response to their national economic and social needs and priorities, among them poverty eradication, the promotion of all human rights, including the right to development, for achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences, and stressed the need for those activities to be undertaken at the request of interested recipient Governments, strictly within the respective mandates of United Nations funds and programmes, which should receive increased contributions from donor countries.

[20] Some 99 per cent of the resident coordinators and 91 per cent of the recipient countries and all donors who have responded agree that United Nations activities have targeted women and girls living in poverty.

[21] WomenWatch has a dedicated section which provides information on and links to available training materials (www.col.org/GenderResources).

[22] Resources that already exist include the "good practice compendium" (www.unifem.org/goodpractices), which is an inter-agency effort, and WomenWatch (www.un.org/womenwatch), as maintained by the Division for the Advancement of Women and sponsored by several other agencies.

[23] This number includes 26 incumbent women resident coordinators and 3 designates. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and UNFPA also have their own web sites on good practices.

[24] UNDG, in consultation with the regional commissions, is taking measures to increase progress in this area, encouraging all resident coordinators to involve regional commissions in participating in the common country assessment and UNDAF from the outset.

[25] The Economic and Social Council, in its decision 1998/284 of 31 July 1998, took note of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the revised guidelines for the review of policies and procedures concerning technical cooperation among developing countries.

[26] For the pilot common results indicators, see TCDC/12/3, annex.